DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 089 SO 009 021

AUTHOR Wigginton, Eliot
TITLE Moments: The Foxfire Experience.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 144p.; For a related document, see SO 009 022
AVAILABLE FROM Institutional Development and Economic Affairs Service, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 ($3.95)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Study; *Educational Alternatives; *Educational Innovation; *Humanistic Education; Interdisciplinary Approach; *Journalism; Learning Activities; Local History; Objectives; Personal Growth; Primary Sources; Process Education; Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; Self Concept; Skill Development; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Foxfire

ABSTRACT

The high school journalism teacher who initiated the Foxfire Project discusses the memorable learning experiences and community studies in which students are involved as they develop and publish the Foxfire magazines. The author describes the project objectives and the successfully implemented teaching techniques and learning activities so that other teachers can use or adapt these ideas and tailor them to their own specific teaching situation. At the heart of Foxfire is the conviction that students can learn about their community and humanity only outside the classroom. The project emphasizes process rather than product. Some observable achievements that accrue to participating students include an acquisition of vocational skills such as editing and writing, photography, marketing, and advertising; pride in their communities and their elders; and interdisciplinary perspective toward learning; and an appreciation for the visual and literary arts used in communication. The major portion of the book describes the four "touchstones" for students and the learning activities through which students achieve these. The four touchstones include: Gaining Skills and Confidence; Growing, Reinforcing, Checking Bases; Beyond Self; and Independence. Included in the appendices are the Introductions to "The Foxfire Book" "Foxfire 2," and "Foxfire 3." (Author/RM)

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Moments

The Foxfire Experience

SO 009 021

MAR 05 1976

Moments

The Foxfire Experience

by ELIOT WIGGINTON

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Printed in United States of America by Star Press Inc., One High Street, Kennebunk, Maine

Aunt Arie Carpenter talking with Eliot Wigginton. "Wig, as he is known to his students, is a high school journalism teacher at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in Georgia. His classes have produced *Foxfire* Magazine for the past nine years, compiled in book form as *The Foxfire Book*, *Foxfire II*, and for publication in early fall of 1975, *Foxfire III*.

This book is dedicated
to my father,
who taught me by example
to be sensitive to others.

Acknowledgments

Ideas and thoughts often form and take shape through bouncing them off others. In that light, I am obligated to a number of patient folks I count as friends.

The following, for example, helped shape the first draft by providing input from their own experiences: Lincoln King of *Loblolly*, Margaret Stevenson of *Cityscape*, Sandy Jeranko of *Sea Chest*, Charles Plaisance of *Nanih Waiya*, and most especially Pam Wood of *Salt*, who not only provided generous, unselfish input, but also designed and shepherded this book through production.

Vital critiques of the first draft came from Herb McArthur, Howard Senzel, Peter Kleinbard, Ronnie Shushan, and Bill Strachan. Their time spent on this leads me to believe they are real allies and I treasure their friendships.

And last, my thanks to Brian and Ann and Murray of IDEAS, people who have believed in Foxfire and its potential from the first time they came in contact with us years ago and have now made the publication of this book possible.

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Introduction

IDEAS' involvement with *Foxfire* came about by fortuitous coincidence. I came across a copy of *Foxfire* magazine in a friend's office at the Smithsonian Institution in 1970. A quick perusal of its pages made me intuitively aware that *Foxfire* represented a prototype learning experience which, with further refinement, had the potential to benefit large numbers of young people.

Shortly thereafter, Eliot Wigginton, or Wig as he is affectionately known, and I met under hilarious circumstances in Washington. Wig telephoned me to explain he had inadvertently run a red light in his pick up truck; was being held at a local police station; did not have the ten dollars needed to get out; and could I help? That was the beginning of a friendship which has strengthened each day since.

Our rapport was instantaneous and over the succeeding months a close affiliation developed. Wig soon became an Associate of IDEAS, and with the help of Ann Vick of our staff, we jointly developed a conceptual framework for extending *Foxfire* to cultures beyond its origins in the Southern Appalachians. The big stumbling block was money. We did not have any. After considerable effort, accompanied by all the attendant frustrations inherent to the imprecise process of fundraising, I succeeded in attracting sufficient support by early 1971 to enable IDEAS to begin working with interested schools toward establishment of demonstration projects which would test our thesis.

During the following three years, more than a dozen locally interpreted Foxfire type projects were initiated with IDEAS' help. Each was established in a diverse geographic and cultural setting of the country. An initial bias toward rural environments and cultural

minorities gradually evolved to embrace virtually all sectors of society, including urban and suburban school systems.

IDEAS purposefully refrained from building a curriculum around *Foxfire*. Rather, our intent has been to assist teachers, administrators and curriculum planners to tailor the concept to meet existing educational needs as determined by their particular schools, districts and state systems. As a consequence definitions of the concept and their interpretations are multiple and have to do with *Foxfire* as a flexible learning vehicle. Hence, my statements about the Foxfire Concept that follow are but aggregate illustrations of what we have observed from our programming experience since 1970.

Foxfire is a learning process possessing a demonstrated capability to use creatively the talents of high school aged youth within a reality structure. It can serve a subject matter purpose while simultaneously providing opportunity by which young people may better sense and develop their own identities. The concept involves students in the establishment of new or renewed relationships by conducting extensive interviews with members of a fast vanishing oldest generation. Out of those relationships the participating youth document the wisdom and capture the essence of their own, immediate, cultural heritage while developing a wide range of academic and practical skills. The result is that schoolwork becomes applicable to the everyday life of their community.

From the outset, the central thrust of Foxfire programs lies in a focus on cultural heritage as a motivational force for learning. This positive effect is reinforced by the initiative and collaboration of students working together in the planning and production of a marketable publication. When the resulting publication succeeds in attracting wide public interest there is further reinforcement made the more meaningful by the approving judgment of a real world. Thus, the major objective of *Foxfire* is to serve cultural pride through engagement of the student's own skills in its discovery. At no stage in life is this more important than in the mid teens, when young people think most deeply about their lives, their futures, and the relevance of their surroundings to both.

There are other attributes to the Foxfire Learning Concept. Some observable achievements which accrue to participating students follow:

—acquisition of vocational skills which are transferable, marketable and useful a lifetime, i.e. editing and writing, photography, darkroom, marketing, bookkeeping, printing, typing, filing, transcribing, design, organization and management, circulation, advertising, public relations, public speaking, museum curation, community leadership and banking.

—acquisition of a discipline for learning, demanding of both individual initiative and communal responsibility.

—acquisition of respect for and pride in their communities, their elders, and the human values which sustain them; and the development of a sense of place and belonging among their own people.

—acquisition of an interdisciplinary perspective toward learning and the interrelationship of subject studies.

—acquisition of an awareness and appreciation for the visual and literary arts as they are applied to enhance the process of communication.

—acquisition of an inquiring sense of direction from which to explore new subjects, develop new relationships, and enter new experiences.

As the first extensions from *Foxfire* came into being so too did a series of mechanisms designed to aid the introductory and follow through transfer process from one location to another.

Foxfire workshops, involving teachers and students, were conducted initially at Rabun Gap. Through the workshops, new project staffs were introduced to basic skills of interviewing with tape recorders, transcription, archiving, photography, darkroom and layout of camera ready copy. Teaching was a shared experience among teachers and students participating in the workshop as, indeed, it must be within an operating project if it is to be a true adaptation of *Foxfire*. More recently workshops have been conducted at the location of new projects, drawing on previously established projects for trainer resources.

During 1973, IDEAS commissioned a 16mm. sound color movie film to be made. When completed the *Foxfire* film proved to have captured the spirit at Rabun Gap with surprising fidelity. Now distributed in a 21 minute version by McGraw Hill Films, this beautiful movie has captured three major awards given by educational film festivals and serves as a primary introductory review of *Foxfire* as a learning concept.

With increasing numbers of Foxfire projects underway in widely dispersed areas of the country, it became incumbent on IDEAS to devise a means for stimulating the sharing of experiences among them. A periodical called *Exchange* was started in 1973, aimed at fostering continued sense of affiliation and kinship among the groups. *Exchange* has reported tricks of the trades, a series of instructional articles, news about the developing projects, and the many credits acruing to each resulting magazine as it began to receive public reaction. This periodical has been made available to the project student staffs and teacher/advisors in quantity since its inception

and more recently to individual subscribers among the general public.

Each of these mechanisms helped the development of those first dozen projects and they continue to be aids to the many new variations from Foxfire we have seen come into being since. However, it had become clear to IDEAS by early 1974 that interest in Foxfire was too widespread for any of us to rely on personal contact and limited access methods for further extensions. Also, we became increasingly mindful that our stewardship of the concept placed on IDEAS and its Associates the responsibility to protect the integrity of what was the essence of a unique learning process. Foxfire had evolved in the mind and imagination of Eliot Wigginton, and through the experiences of Rabun Gap students, now joined by teachers and students from a dozen diverse cultures and communities. We needed a clear, concise statement of underlying philosophy and process which would communicate to teachers what we meant by the term "The Foxfire Learning Concept."

The idea was broached with Wig in a series of meetings involving IDEAS staff during January and February 1974. There was some reluctance. How do you take a humanistic approach, richly personal in its evolution and reduce it to a written statement without, by that act, dehumanising it? We had to avoid the spiritual death which would come inevitably from a "manualized" presentation of Foxfire.

Wig's instincts carried us through the quandary. It was simple, really. Foxfire is about presenting kids with a series of experiences leading to real, self-perceived learning moments. There it was. The concept and a title all in one! Discussion whirred, felt tip pens squeaked on news print sheets, and by day's end Wig's outline had been formed.

It would be a personal statement, because Foxfire is a very personal experience, and it would address observable happenings among kids, rather than the mechanisms of program structure. *Moments* was underway. Later reviewed and critiqued by other teacher/advisors, this statement came to reflect the broad experience of Foxfire and its many exponents. Through 1974, *Moments* was tested among teachers in Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, Colorado, Georgia, Vermont and scores of other locations. All the while, the manuscript and a primitive print version was subjected to Wig's own continuous scrutiny until the point was reached for this first formal edition to be published.

During the process which led to the writing of *Moments*, a companion idea was formed. We needed another statement written for students and skills oriented, which would be keyed to the philosophy presented in *Moments*. For that we turned to Pamela Wood, teacher/

advisor of *Salt* at Kennebunk, Maine. The result is a guide to cultural journalism which will be published by IDEAS in the spring of 1975 as an additional element in our continuing effort to build effective instructional materials, reflecting both the spirit and the how-to of Foxfire.

By mid 1974 the Foxfire Learning Concept had evolved to the point of full potential for making a significant impact upon secondary education. It had become more than a successful model project worthy of replication. The process underlying Foxfire is applicable and adaptable to a wide range of subject matter teaching goals, including: English, journalism, local history, social studies, environmental studies, bilingual and bicultural education, vocational skills development, and the humanities. Perhaps of greater significance, however, through active participation in a Foxfire inspired program young people are afforded a reality learning experience which can help them discover themselves to be worthy, self-reliant, compassionate and contributing members of their own communities.

In this Bicentennial Era, when we as a nation are searching for renewed devotion to principle and human values, Foxfire programs in towns, cities and schools throughout the country are making a profound contribution to our American self-awareness. They are bit by bit creating a present day anthology of the common man, celebrating the gift of diversity and personal experience that so enriches our lives. We find it fitting for a concept which reintroduces the young to the old to be at the forefront of our hope that from rediscovery of who we are as a people may come the renewal of spirit for which all yearn.

IDEAS is proud of its role in helping Foxfire to spread and in presenting in furtherance of that effort Eliot Wigginton's *Moments*.

Brian Beun
President
IDEAS
Spring 1975

Moments

The Beginning

We should get something straight right now, at the beginning, before we get into this too deeply. I'm a teacher. But I am also a human being—subject to all the frailties, moods, fits and starts of others. Sometimes I am jealous; sometimes frustrated and angered out of all proportion by events or circumstances that should not so set me off; sometimes I am selfish; sometimes disoriented, confused and groping. Sometimes, after a particularly bad day, I think that I do not deserve the frightening title of "teacher."

Let me illustrate: Shortly I will finish my ninth year of teaching—my ninth year of working with *Foxfire*. If you got my students together in a group and asked them to point out my favorites, they could probably do that. If you asked each of them to relate to you a series of experiences they had had this year with *Foxfire* that were resoundingly positive, many could do that, but some could not. If you examined them for statistical evidence that their facility with grammar and composition had improved through their work with our group, you could find evidence of that with some, but not all.

We, as teachers, are in a hit-and-miss profession. We win some and we lose some. I imagine you're reading this to try to find out how to win more battles than you lose. That's half the struggle won right there.

Just remeber as you look at our project for ideas that it is not without its flaws. I invite you to be skeptical of my teaching methods. I urge you to improve upon them and to share those improvements with me. Someday, perhaps all of us can do better than we did today.

Okay. So what's the document you're holding? It is something for you to rewrite, add to, improve upon, and tailor to your own specific teaching situation if you feel it has applicability at all. It was written for two reasons:

First, a mounting flood of letters that say, essentially, "We've heard about your project and would like to do the same thing here in our school in Utah. Would you please tell us what the project is all about, how you got started, and what we need to know to do it here?"

Second, my own firsthand knowledge of an increasing number of misunderstandings about, and hence bastardizations and misapplications of, the underlying philosophy behind the *Foxfire* idea. I don't care what positive wrinkles or alterations are made in terms of projects or products or methods—I welcome these variations; but if it's going to be called a *Foxfire*-type project, and that label is going to be used to attract financial and/or administrative support, I'd at least like the basic philosophy, with its emphasis on *process* rather than *product*, to shine through clean and unimpaired by ego, greed or stupidity. Perhaps I ask too much, but when I walk into a school and am shown their *Foxfire* project, and it turns out to be indistinguishable from their ancient history course, I cannot help but become disillusioned and angered.

This document, then, is one that remains open to changes in approach and methodology, but would seek to discourage aberrations that would wind up misleading or boring or damaging kids in the same old way.

It is my personal statement as a teacher. It is more than I have been able to do with every one of my kids, but it is a goal I constantly aspire to. It is what I would like *Foxfire* to look like in the best of all possible worlds. It is the underlying philosophy —the engine that drives our project.

Some Cautions

At the very heart of Foxfire is the conviction that students can learn about their community and about humanity only outside the classroom. In the classroom they can, with the help of their teachers and peers, examine, analyze, even celebrate what they've discovered, and compare their findings with those of others; but they must have the world outside the classroom as the primary motivation for learning, and at the heart and soul of *what* they learn.

This conviction places demands on a teacher (and administrator) that would be intolerable to many of his peers. For one thing, it demands that you be ready for the unpredictable, for each kid's experiences out there are going to differ, as will their responses to them. It demands that you be prepared to take kids on interviews after school hours if they cannot go by themselves. It demands that you scour the community, sometimes alone, for experience you would like your kids to have (and may mean bringing contacts from the outside into the classroom and then getting them home again). It demands a tremendous expenditure of energy and imagination and ingenuity.

It also demands that you put in hours and hours of time for which you will never be reimbursed monetarily. If you have a product like a community magazine, for example, are you willing to work with kids on weekends and into nights to get it ready for publication? Are you willing to spend weeks begging for funds for a darkroom? Are you aware of the fact that sub-

scription requests, and letters from subscribers or colleagues or reporters or newsstands have no respect for summer vacations?

And have you thought about the fact that there can be no "text" for this course? That to have a text would destroy its whole purpose? That you will constantly have to improvise ways to involve your kids since you can't send them home with a tidy chapter to read with a neat list of questions at its end for them to answer?

Are you aware that you may find yourself spending twice as much for gasoline as you ever did before? Three times as much for food (who's going to feed those kids when they're out working and they miss lunch or supper)?

Or that as a teacher you'll be working twice as hard as you ever did before - and not getting paid a cent more for it?

Have you thought about any of those things?

"There can be no 'text' for this course."

Teachers are human beings, subject to human frustrations and frailties. As corollary to the above, and an easy trap to fall into is that of feeling like the unsung, unappreciated martyr. You know you're putting in more time than your colleagues, yet your kids don't seem to appreciate that fact. So you begin to tell them. Now, they've heard that line before. All of us have had mothers, for example, who complained about the fact that they had cooked all day and nobody complimented them on the meal. Or fathers who had slaved at the office all day, and then the ungrateful children wouldn't help them with the trash, or pick up the toys in the yard.

Kids shy away from self-pity. They feel awkward, and helpless to respond. They don't like being reminded how much you're sacrificing for them, and if you feel you have to start reminding them, it's a sign something's gone wrong with the relationship and you need to start asking yourself some questions. Maybe you've expected something from them that they, being essentially (and rightfully) self-centered, aren't yet prepared to give. Maybe you're looking in the wrong place for your gratification.

You have a right to expect cooperation in keeping equipment clean and subscription files straight, for example. That's part of the learning process. And you may find eventually, that you can look for honest respect. But you have no right to expect reverence, or pity, or sympathy for your work load, much less love. If that's why you're into it, then get out now. The love they may feel for you will be a by-product of your caring relationship with them, and the way you interact together as humans, not a reward for your hours of thankless toil.

Another easy trap to fall into (almost an opposite of the above) with a project of this sort is to feel so good about what you're accomplishing that, after a few magazine articles about

you, a few newspaper interviews, you find yourself ego-tripping not only in front of your colleagues, but also in front of your kids.

The thing that has helped me most in Rabun Gap in those situations has been the kids themselves. Someone comes into the office looking for my autograph, and as soon as he leaves, a kid is there poking me in the ribs and grinning, "Uh huh. Think you're a pretty big deal, don't you? Can I have your autograph too, mister?" And we both collapse in laughter and I kick him in the backside and he runs out whooping with glee. If the kids care about you, they'll want to keep you for themselves. Outsiders can't have you. Period.

Girls are especially good at keeping you humble, not by conscious design, but because their own needs seem to be so often up front, requiring an ego-submerging tenderness that makes your own needs seem almost criminally inappropriate.

This spring, for example, I took two girls to Atlanta to give an evening speech before a group of nearly 600 people. We had put in a full day already with the drive down there, two engagements, and finding and checking into the hotel, and so we were bushed and a little apprehensive before the talk.

It went very well. We received a standing ovation, and both the girls and I were mobbed with autograph seekers and handshakers afterwards. I was feeling pretty good about the whole thing, and when the crowd subsided and we were picking up our stuff, one of the girls—an eleventh grader named Bit Carver—asked, "Well, how did we do?"

I said, "You *know* you did well. The number of folks that mobbed you proves that. I heard them telling you how much they liked what you said."

"Yeah," she said. "But I wanted to hear it from you."

We drove back to the hotel in silence and on the way, Bit sort of hugged herself and grinned. "It really makes me happy that you think we were good. That we did okay. That really makes me glad."

The egos of students are so fragile that it should make our own needs as adult teachers almost immaterial. Recently we

had a Board of Directors meeting here in Rabun Gap with Board members from all over the country in attendance. Seven kids volunteered to come to an evening social gathering to help serve, clean up and generally be around to pitch in whenever and wherever they could. I invited them all. During the evening, one of the boys came and said of one of the girls who was there, "Kathy's got the idea that you don't like her very much - or that you're mad at her or something." It landed on my head like a ton of cement. I have yet to figure out how she got that idea - perhaps in the pressure of the occasion some slight that I didn't even notice - but I took steps that night to get her involved and center stage, hopefully without seeming obvious.

A more subtle form of ego-tripping is the request by the teacher at the end of the year for a written evaluation of the course by each student. An honest relationship between students and their teacher throughout the year should have provided plenty of opportunity for frank verbal evaluations along this line. At the end of the year, it's all over; and grades hanging on the balance, most students wind up saying lots of things they neither mean nor feel. I personally find this kind of activity particularly grating, even though I have teacher friends who indulge in it.

Yet another trap teachers involved in Foxfire projects can fall prey to is that of focusing on the end product so intensely that the process is forgotten or downplayed. I feel that some sort of an end product (magazine, newspaper, television show, radio program) is a valuable conclusion to kids' activities because it forces them through the discipline of working their material into communicable form, and also sets them up for reactions and praise from an audience they weren't even aware existed. Knowing that something is going to *happen* to their work is one of the most powerful motivations around. Their work is not going to be dropped into some black hole never to be seen again, or never to be commented upon except in the form of that hopelessly inadequate tool we have known

as the "grade." It is important. It is going to be used. You care about it. It *matters*.

But far too often (and I can give specific examples) in the desire to create a superlative product, the teacher hand picks those few superior students who can produce and doesn't allow the others to get involved. The end product is often impressive, but the kids that could have benefited the most from this kind of activity were ignored (as usual) and lost. A *Foxfire* activity is ideally suited for those poor kids who have gotten stimulation, reward and a sense of achievement nowhere else. Kids that can't write well (yet) can conduct magical interviews or take brilliant photographs—and later find themselves writing captions and descriptions to go with them. Kid that don't read well (yet) can make wonderful videotapes and films and slide shows —and later find themselves reading and writing scripts. Kids that have been led to feel that the workaday world out there bears no relation to their school suddenly find something that refutes that, and they blossom. I'm pretty sure of this. I've watched it happen for nine years.

One of our worst students—a girl named Barbara Taylor, who almost dropped out in the tenth grade—had withdrawn from those around her because of constant criticism for the fact that she always wore bluejeans to school. Then we took the time to find out that she wore jeans because her mother still washed her clothes with lye soap in an iron pot filled with boiling water, and jeans were the only clothing that could take that kind of punishment. We had her work on an article about washing clothes that way; and we published it, and she began to open up. As a senior, with failing grades in English in the past, she sold a story to *Seventeen* for $400.00, and she walked about for days with the money, in cash, in her pocket—holding it.

Sometimes she'd go through the lunch line in the school cafeteria and hand the cashier a hundred-dollar bill for a six-cent carton of milk. When she graduated, she was one of the three girls we hired for a full year to initiate one of the most important extensions of our project: the close examination by students of social problems in our county.

Buck Carver with the authentic miniature still (one gallon) he made for the Foxfire museum.

Three other girls I had from a family of eleven were all potential dropouts, and they were all ashamed of their father, who was a moonshiner, and their mother, who was a maid in a state park nearby. Through interviews with their father for

Foxfire articles, they came to see him as a man of tremendous strengths who, through the worst times this country could throw at him, kept a roof over their heads, clothes on their backs, and food on their table. We have hired two of those girls to work for us full time during summers, and we've had all three on major trips to cities like Chicago to work with fledgling *Foxfire* projects. Two of them are going to college this fall. One of those girls is Bit Carver.

I think about the maddest I ever got was during a workshop I conducted at a little high school in North Carolina. At my request, craftsmen were brought to the school so the kids could interview, tape and photograph them as a group. Two Indian grandmothers began by weaving a cornshuck seat into a chair. Within twenty minutes, excited kids were clustered around them learning how to do it themselves, and trading stories and experiences with the women. It was a wonderful morning.

That afternoon, a teacher I hadn't met before approached me in the hall. It turned out that she was in charge of the special education class—about twenty-five kids with learning disabilities—and had heard about some of the activities I had been initiating. She told me how her class was always left out of the various activities that swirled about day by day, and she wondered if I might be able to find a moment to come and see her kids so they wouldn't feel ignored.

I went the next morning and spent two hours with them talking and laughing and trading ideas. As I was about to leave, a young girl came up to me: "You know those two ladies that came to school yesterday? One of them was my grandmother."

That young Lumbee girl, who of all the kids in that school could have most used a boost, wasn't even made a part of an activity that could have done more for her sense of self-esteem and self-worth than all the government money spent in that school that year. For a moment, in the eyes of that student body, she could have been somebody special. Instead, the chance was missed.

To ignore those kids who can benefit most; to focus on product so exclusively that the only kids involved are those who, through their Beta Club standing have already proved they *can*

produce, and who already have their feet on the ground; to involve only those sharp kids to the exclusion of the ones who really need it is criminal, and is a misuse of the whole *Foxfire* philosophy that I find repugnant. To involve them means giving more of yourself as a teacher and as a human, but name a kid that deserves less.

The "moments" that form the core of this document are essentially positive. They emphasize again and again those events that you can effect in kids' lives that will help them grow into confident, strong, able young men and women. But they are only moments. All of us know life doesn't grant us a constant "high" —a consistently positive experience. It is a subtle mixture of moods and inflections—an ebb and flow of happiness and sorrow, up and down. Kids are down at times despite us. We are down at times despite ourselves. That happens. It is natural. It is real. It is right that it be so. The best we can do is acknowledge that fact, and realize that not all we do

is going to work—and not punish ourselves or resent our kids when things go awry. Acknowledge that there are times when Kaye is better left alone—perhaps with a word or two like, "Don't feel so great today do you? That's okay. Take a walk if you feel like it. And if you need me for anything, or want to sit down and shoot the breeze a little while, let me know. I'll be here. You take care. Don't let 'em get you . . . ."

When she comes back up, she'll come up higher and swing farther for your patience than she would have had you pushed or been abrupt.

The same is demanded of you when a student tries an idea and it doesn't work. Failure is a part of life also. The important thing is not to punish the student for that failure, but to let him feel the disappointment, to sympathize with that, and to understand. Just as counter-productive as disciplining the kid at this point is dismissing the failure as irrelevant, and putting on a jovial, "It-doesn't-matter-anyway face." It matters to the kid. If it didn't, he wouldn't be down.

And there are times when I am down. Something hasn't worked; or a kid I care about has been kicked out of school—or has kicked me; or I've just lost a battle I thought I had won. I try to be honest with my kids, and let them know. They understand, for they have moods, too, and they'll go on about their business and be considerate. I have some kids who read me like a book, and though working with them becomes more difficult when I'm down, their presence becomes a source of strength rather than a trial.

When things we all try together don't work out too well, or when I try something "up" with them when they're all down, and the activity's failure then puts me down, we're honest enough with each other that the end product of that failure is not resentment or disgust, but a shrug of the shoulders, a "Maybe next time," even a good laugh together and a, "Boy, we blew the hell out of that one, didn't we?" And then we start all over.

They understand.

No one expects a twenty-four hour high. Life is life. Your project must reflect (as well as influence) reality.

Touchstones

So we come to the core of this document. The ultimate definition of this whole approach happened because of Carlton Young and the story I related about him in the introduction to *Foxfire 2*. Something happened to Carlton that day in the darkroom. I can't come close to analyzing just what it was, but I do know that suddenly there was a moment of awakening. Suddenly another cluster of brain cells was activated . . . suddenly Carlton was on another level—a new plateau—ready for a whole new set of experiences and challenges. Suddenly when he put together that special image, some things fell into place for him. Something clicked.

We, as teachers, never know what "clicks" are going to happen with which kids at what instants of time. We operate, often, in ignorance. But my feeling is that these "moments" of awakening are essential to the process of moving a kid out of himself and into the world of man. Until his own ego is satisfied, and until he knows he has worth as an individual and has been recognized by others as having worth, he cannot move beyond himself to an unselfish caring about others. He cannot become whole, able to make choices and exercise those options that are open to him in a positive way. He becomes a cripple both to himself and those around him. A burden to be carried.

We've all seen, for example, the adult child who persists in drawing attention to, and making a bore of himself. Often the

individual was crippled in childhood and is still trying to prove to himself and others that he deserves to be alive.

Carlton got me looking, and as I watched, I noticed that there were hundreds of these moments of time that, under the right conditions, could happen to kids engaged in *Foxfire* projects. If they could be recorded somehow—listed—and that list could become a checksheet for teachers, maybe we'd be onto something.

Here, then, is my stab in the direction of a checklist. I'm not telling you *how* to make these things happen. That's up to you and your own approach. What I am saying is that if you use this and somehow make many of these things happen for many of your kids, you'll increase the possibilities of coming closer to helping them be fuller, happier, more competent adults. Certainly they will, at the very least, go into life with a reservoir of good, solid positive experiences behind them—touchstones they will come back to again and again—to bolster them through the hard times.

The moments are arranged on four levels. This is an acceptable logic for moving a kid from self-centeredness to a caring about the world around him, but it is not a true logic. You will find as I do, for example, that you'll have a kid on your hands who in some ways is already doing things at level three or four, but has yet to have a number of level one activities hit him. In reality, there is a constant movement between the levels and this must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, the moments themselves *can* be roughly grouped according to complexity and sophistication. Learning to use a camera or print a photograph is less complex (and initially more self-indulgent) than helping to create a piece of legislation for a community that will better the plight of many of its citizens.

As you look at the moments, you will see that folklore *per se* (or local history or oral history or whatever) does not have to be the vehicle you use to make these things happen. A perfectly good project utilizing all the following activities might be a community magazine that talked not about the past but about the present—in short, attempted to paint a portrait of the com-

munity in words and photographs. Studs Terkel points the way with *Working*. The same learning experiences, by in large, are there.

I'm not saying that every school should have a *Foxfire*—a project identical to ours. I'm simply saying that if you can put your kids in positions where they can experience many of the following moments (no matter what the end product or the vehicle or your style of teaching), they will have a chance of coming far closer than the average high school student to being sensitive and whole as human beings.

Level I

Gaining Skills and Confidence

I work with a great many students who have been damaged. In many cases, because of the treatment they have received from peers ("Boy, are you stupid!") and/or adults ("Can't you do anything right?) they have come to believe there is little they are good at. Consequently, there is little they attempt. It's not much fun to try something and get laughed at by peers or failed by adults as a consequence. Once burned, one approaches matches with caution.

I believe that before a student can act *effectively*, he has to know he can *act*. I believe that before he can become truly sensitive to, and concerned about, other people's egos and needs, he has to have his own ego and needs satisfied. I believe that he can't often move beyond himself until he is comfortable *with* himself and his capabilities—convinced of his worth. These things seem obvious to me, and they form one platform from which I operate.

The vehicle I use with each student at this level is the individual creation of an article that will appear in our magazine. I'm not really concerned with its length. I'm just concerned that each student go through all the steps necessary to complete

that article successfully, and then see it in print. Other teachers will choose different vehicles that will prove to be equally effective (the production of a video program that is broadcast over the local cable, for example). The point here is that whatever the product, it should not be make-believe work. It's real stuff, with a real purpose and genuine importance.

There follows a cluster of activities—a sampling of the kinds of things I do with my kids at this level, and why I do them. They lead not only to the creation of a publishable piece, but also serve to bind the student to the project itself (if he knows the project is significant and worthwhile, he'll tend to regard his own contribution to it with more justifiable pride), and to the surrounding community (the beginnings of this personal, caring commitment to something other than himself can lay the foundation for later drawing him beyond himself into a genuine concern for others).

This cluster represents one totality of experience. It is like a watch. None of the parts alone can do the whole job, but each makes a contribution in its own way. Each can be modified or added to by an inventive teacher to make the watch perform more effectively—that is the one beauty of anything that is man-made. I constantly refine and change and add to the pieces.

Even though the main thrust here is to begin to satisfy each student's ego and sense of self-esteem, my personal approach is to downplay that goal verbally and concentrate on achieving it quietly. I may say to a student, "Look, this camera looks like a Chinese puzzle, but it's really not so bad. Come on outside with me and I'll show you how it works, and then you can fire off a couple of shots yourself and we'll print them and see what happens. Right?" But I do not say to a student, "The main purpose of this exercise is to prove to you that you can operate a camera and thereby add to your sense of self-esteem and satisfy your ego." Much of the work I do in this direction I never verbalize at all. I simply watch, work behind the scenes to make things happen, and constantly ask myself if each kid is coming along, and if not, where I am going wrong? I want to give him a deep, firm, unselfish sense of worth—not turn him into a self-indulgent egomaniac.

What I *do* verbalize is two-pronged:

First, I celebrate the community and the rich variety of folks that live within it. That is the force I use to awaken, direct and give energy to the kids' own competencies.

Second, I emphasize to them the notion that they are going to be trying to touch others through what they do—to reach out and help others feel what they have felt and share what they have shared. I like each student to approach an article, conscious of an audience out there, saying to himself, "I just had a great experience, and I'd like to share it with you."

With your help, as a sensitive teacher, they'll be able to do just that.

The Activities

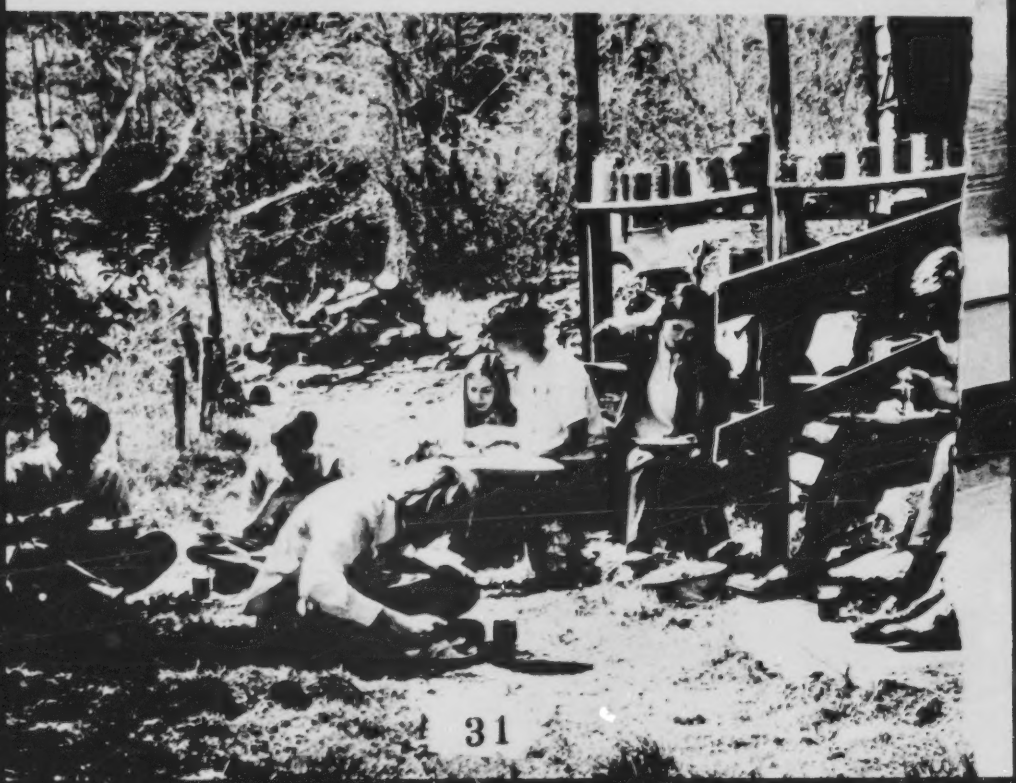
1.

With our base anchored in the community, one of the most important activities for each student to engage in is work within that community to see not only what kinds of people make it up, but also get a sense of how our project (and the students themselves) mesh there. Something should happen early to give each kid a community experience to remember.

Each, for example, should be placed in an interview situation with a charismatic contact—hopefully the sort of person he never would have taken the time to talk with otherwise—so that he comes away shaking his head in amazement that "people like that" exist and will respond to him as an individual. It should be the sort of contact who will make him feel that he is special, and that the project is special, and that because he took the time to visit, that contact's day was made a little better.

Aunt Arie Carpenter is one of a number of contacts with whom we keep in touch who has that power. A visit to her log house is a sure-fire fine experience every time, for each time she insists on feeding the kids who come, and gets them all to help her cook the meal on her ancient, wood-burning stove. Once when we visited, she was trying to get the eyeballs out of a hog's head so that she could make souse meat. She couldn't do it alone, and so she got the kid I had taken, Paul Gillespie, to help her. The record of that interview forms one of the early chapters in *The Foxfire Book*, and the experience is one that Paul, now a senior at the University of Virginia, still talks about

Below, Foxfire kids eating dinner at Aunt Arie's. Photo right, Aunt Arie cooking on her wood stove.



with awe. [Paul just applied to us for a full-time job as an adult staff member beginning the day he graduates.]

The moment I always savor whenever I take kids up to her log house—and I've done it several hundred times—is when it's time to leave. Without fail (and without prior instruction—it's just natural and spontaneous every time) the kids line up to say goodbye to her individually. She always grasps the hand of each, looks into each face for a long time, and says, "You be sure to come back now. I'll be thinking about you while you're gone. Don't forget me." And as we walk over the hill, we look back at her standing on the porch watching us go, and she often says as she waves, "Now's when I'll be lonely . . ."

John Conley's another. An old blacksmith, he once made a wagon wheel for us. An error in the pattern he used to cut out the felloes for the rim caused the rim to take on a slightly scalloped effect instead of being perfectly round. We told him it wouldn't matter for we had all the instructions we needed to describe the technique of making one, but when we went back several days later to pick up the wheel, we noticed that the rim was perfectly round. Stan Echols, one of the students in charge of the interview, asked him about it, and John told him that the error had bothered him so much that he had gotten up in the middle of the night, driven to his shop, and cut out a new pattern and a new set of felloes because everything that had come out of his shop to date had been representative of his best, and he didn't want this wheel to be any different. Stan talks about that moment in the *Foxfire* film, and says, "Now, whenever I start out to do something, that always pops into my mind, and it gives me the incentive to go on and try to do better." Stan later volunteered to head up a group that tried to get John some extra money through selling his froes via our magazine. *(See Level III, 1)*. The effort was a real success. The froes sold for fifteen dollars apiece. Subscribers would mail us the checks, Stan would take them to John, pick up the froes, bring them back, and mail them out. The magazine picked up the tab for postage and packing so that John could keep the whole purchase price.

Then there's Millard Buchanan, a retired logger with a thousand salty stories who was just hired to be the foreman at the reconstruction of twenty-five log buildings on our own land (using the kids as his crew). When the kids visit him at home, he says (and means), "*Foxfire*'s the best thing that ever happened to this county. You kids be sure and keep it going." Or Harry (a furniture maker) and Marinda (a fine weaver) Brown, who got their craft business going after an article about them appeared in *Foxfire*. They can show the kids exactly why the magazine has been important to them, and the kids are so fond of them, they elected the Browns to serve on our dozen-member community advisory board. Harry's making a full-sized replica of an old loom for us now, complete in every detail down to the wooden pegs, and the handmade reed. When it's

done, he wants to get the kids together to help him move it up to one of those cabins of ours and set it up, and then watch as Marinda threads it and starts to weave a piece of cloth (which one of the kids will finish). He wants to have a picnic at the same time, and turn the occasion into a real celebration.

Millard laughing as Rusty splits boards. ("Turkey" looks on.)

Or Kenny Runion, who welcomes each kid with a riddle or with one of his special wire puzzles to untangle, and then chuckles as they struggle. He works in wood, and as the kids leave, he gives them each a ring made of laurel—most of my kids wear them. Orders from *Foxfire* subscribers have kept him off welfare and independent, and he makes sure each kid knows.

I could tell hundreds of other stories like that, but I think the point is made. Out there, the kids meet people who are special, and who make them feel special, and that's a big part of what it's all about. Try all kinds of things to make it happen often. Sometimes we start the year bringing some of those people together in the class for a party or for a long discussion. Sometimes we bring them in for an evening supper and let the kids sit around them as they tell stories and laugh together. Sometimes an "Aunt Arie" will say she hasn't seen some person in the community for years as she can't get around too well, and we'll get a couple of kids together, go and find that person, and take him up to see her and participate in the big reunion.

Two Thanksgivings ago, we took Aunt Arie to Toccoa, a town thirty-five miles south of us, to be with her brother and his family for the day. It was a huge gathering, and we were made part of it. This Thanksgiving, Aunt Arie was in the hospital. We went to see her, and she looked at us with a grin: "Remember where we were on this day last year? That was the best day of my life. I've just been lying here thinking about it."

Sometimes the smallest gestures make a difference, and cap an interview on a resoundingly positive note. Once two of my students found and interviewed a pair of brothers in their little shack far back in the hills. After the interview Dickie Chastain rewound the tape and played a portion of it back for them. They had never heard themselves before—or even seen a tape recorder before—and it amazed them. Later, Dickie found out that they had gone to see a neighbor after he and Wayne had left and had exclaimed to him, "Those *Foxfire* kids came and interviewed us, and they had a little box with them. And when they got through, they fiddled with that thing a few minutes

and turned it on and it told us everything we'd said!" That simple gesture cemented the friendship. Likewise the time we took another contact out, and stopped for lunch at a restaurant, never realizing for a moment that she had never been in one before. The experience is one she still talks about—as do the kids.

2. Still another way to involve the kids quickly and forcefully is to put them to work revamping a circulation system that has broken down, or reworking a filing system, equipment check-out system, or darkroom usage/cleanup system that for one reason or another is not working as well as it could. The fact that they're expected to come up with a solution, and are trusted to put it into effect and try to make it work (without an adult coming in and saying, "All right. I'm sick of this. Here's the way it's going to work from now on. This way. Understand?") is sometimes so forceful an experience that I know at least one teacher who purposely lets things break down so the kids can appoint a task force of their peers to get in there and fix it up. When her first group set up its initial magazine newsstand distribution system, she let them go ahead and offer unequal discounts to different stores even though she knew it would turn the books into spaghetti and wind up in a lot of hair pulling. It happened as she had predicted to herself it would, and she says that the hassling they went through to revise the system was one of the best experiences they had all year. They were trusted with the responsibility, and they responded. The same thing happened here. Trouble is that as far as I can see, our system isn't fixed yet to the point where it works to everyone's satisfaction, and so we're constantly changing policy and driving the stores that stock our magazines right out of their corporate minds. But that's okay. The world goes on . . .

Billy's picture of Maude on Frank.

3. I've already emphasized the magic that happens in the darkroom between kids and trays of developer. The expression on their faces when their first photograph begins to materialize before their eyes in that sorcerer's chemical tells it all. You know something's happening that's got more force than any text they ever read or any lecture they ever heard from you. All we can do is stand out of the way and let it happen.

There is another kind of drama here that should be mentioned. Billy Maney took some photographs one day (they were among his first) of Maude Shope riding her mule, Frank. The photographs appeared in our second book, *Foxfire 2*. He liked her so well that not long after that interview, he and several other students went to visit her to get some additional photographs and an hour or so of tape. When they got there, her daughter told them that Maude had died that week.

When the daughter learned that Billy had taken some pictures, she asked if the family could possibly have copies. It seems that the whole time Maude had been up on Coweeta Creek, the only pictures that had been taken of her at all were those that Billy got one afternoon. If he hadn't taken the time, there would have been none.

Ditto Jess Rickman who was photographed by one of my kids at a grist mill on Betty's Creek one day. Two hours later, his tractor rolled over on him killing him instantly.

Photographs are such a powerful medium. Sometimes I go a local restaurant to pore over an envelope full of prints over a cup of coffee. It doesn't take long for people to begin to gather around wondering what you've got. This magnetic attraction between photos and people can be used to advantage in a number of ways to provide kids with another kind of moment:

As soon as an article is completed, you might ask the kids that took the photographs to select a number from among the culls that are left over and take them, personally, to the subject. The reaction from the subject will be immediate, and warm; and this act of giving something he has created is a significant moment for a kid.

Another: I had a student one year, Randall Williams, that looked as though he was going to be impossible to involve in anything. One day I took him out, taught him how to use a camera, and then said, "Look, Randall. We've got to go to press next week with *Foxfire*'s cumulative five-year index. I'd really like to make it look nice—look like something other than a solid book of microscopic letters and numbers. The other kids that know how to take pictures are all tied up with articles, so now that you know how to use a camera, I'd really like for you to help us out. I'll give you a week off from class. Starting next Monday, don't even come into the classroom to check in. Just get into your car during the journalism period and take off into the country and get me a series of pictures of old barns, houses, trees—things that would really make a nice series of pictures to liven up that index. At the end of the week, bring the film in and we'll work it up."

He took off, brought back two rolls of film (the fact that he probably took them all in the same day didn't make any difference to me) and we developed them. I showed him how to print the negatives, set the darkroom aside for him alone for three days because the project was so "vital," and he came out with a series of photos that we used for that index, and that I could not have been more pleased with. Then, with some help, he chose the one for the cover, did the layouts for the inside pages, and we went to press.

While we were waiting for the index to be finished, I took the best of the culls, got permission from the principal to use one of the hall bulletin boards, and hung the photographs one night in that bulletin board with a printed heading that said, "Photographs of Local Scenes Taken By Randall Williams." The next day he came in to find a large group of students clustered around the board looking at and exclaiming over what they saw there. From that point on, having been set apart for just a moment from the rest of his classmates as a person deserving of their respect and attention, he was in. He worked with us for two years—until he graduated—and I marvel still at the impact those few moments had on him as a person.

A weekly exhibit of photographs, using a new photographer each time, is a simple thing to carry off, and its effect is unquestionable. It can even be carried one step further if the photographer is encouraged to choose one of his favorites from the exhibit and give it to his principal or one of his teachers. I've seen some amazing turn arounds when a student has done that to an adult who somehow he has gotten on the wrong side of. . . .

4. At this point I also like the students to be involved in exercises that begin to get their eyes open to the world around them. I ask each, when in an interview situation, to look closely at the room/environment of the contact, list all the things he notes there, and the same day write a full description of the setting using that list. He should create a photograph in words so that the audience that couldn't be with him will be able to see and feel the person and the room, and share the moment with him as fully as possible. The idea here is not only to get the student watching the world he encounters, but also to prove to him that he has power over words and can use them as tools rather than the reverse. He should be able to make words paint pictures for him and know that because he opened his eyes, he was able to create something special.

It's important that the student make the actual list on site. If he waits until he gets home, or until the next day, half of what

he saw will be gone. If he makes the list right away, however, and then uses that to create an introduction, say, to an article, he can come up with something like this introduction to the Hillard Green personality portrait:

". . . Essentially [his house] is a room with a roof on it. The wooden floor is bare and unwaxed. There's no ceiling—it's open to the ridgepole except for places where planks have been laid on the joists to provide a storage area above. A wood stove, a battered sofa, an ancient double bed, a table covered with an oilcloth, and a stiff-backed chair are the basic furnishings. Throughout the room, however, one spots the little details that make it home: the sardine can nailed to the wall for a soap dish; the neat stack of wood beside the stove; the horizontal poplar pole on which a clean pair of overalls and a dishtowel hang; the axe, pile of onions, and canned tomatoes and cucumbers under the bed; the garden tools and walking sticks over beside the door; the kerosene lamp; the outside door pull made of a discarded thread spool and the inside one made from the crook of a laurel bough; the bucket and dipper for cold water from the spring; the mop made of a pole with a burlap sack tied to the end—all these things label the house as Hillard's and make it his alone . . ."

I also like to get the kids looking for signs as an exercise that will hopefully help to keep their eyes open even when they aren't in interview situations. Recently, for example, one of my kids spotted a huge highway sign that read, "Road Construnction." He was so captivated with the idea that that highway department must have duplicated the misspelling hundreds of times on signs all over the state, that he took a photograph of it, and we used the photo on the back cover of the Winter 1973 issue of the magazine.

There are lots of other exercises that can be used. Sometimes, in the middle of a class, I tell all the kids to shut their eyes. When they're all closed, I ask how many can tell me the color of the walls of the room they're in, or the color of my shirt, or how many windows there are in the room, or whether or not the door has a transom above it. It's amazing how many can't.

5. I also like to do things that I hope will begin to open their ears. As each student transcribes his tape(s), I ask him to listen to it carefully—comb through it—for eloquent expressions, pieces of wisdom, apt descriptions and the like. When the article is typed and ready to lay out, I have the student set some of those phrases in transfer lettering and use them for emphasis throughout the layout—even as photo captions.

The kids who worked up the flu epidemic article, for example, pulled out phrases like, "I've got good neighbors here now. I could whistle fer'em and they'd come" for special emphasis. In the Mary Carpenter portrait, they found things like, "Why does Russia and us want t' go? Ain't th' earth good enough for a'body?" And, "A haint can't haint another haint." In the Aunt Nora Garland tape they plucked out, "I believe God is working in me to help people." From Aunt Arie they get things like, "I don't care for it a bit more'n spit in the fire," or, "I love that better'n a cat loves sweet milk," or "I'm getting old now. I can't quilt anymore. Can't crochet. Can't garden. Can't bottom chairs or make baskets. Can't do a lot of the things I used to do. But I can still love."

The idea, as in Moment 4, is to get the students listening for the things that words can do as they bump against each other, for the power they can have, and for the fact that they can be friends and allies instead of enemies. Words are there for them to use, and people use them in individual fashions, often in a way no other person would have thought to. Each student has his own insights and his own powers of observation, and he can develop his own knack for using those powers and translating them into language.

The carry-over from activities like these into the English curriculum is obvious, and the student should be made aware of this so that he doesn't put the real focus on language only when he is doing something that relates to journalism.

A group of teachers working together can reinforce this cross-curriculum idea frequently to the ultimate benefit of the kid. An English teacher might allow one of the student's arti-

cles to count as a composition or two for her class as well if the student is being urged to pay attention to grammar and proofreading and figurative speech and description. An investigation of farming practices or planting by the signs of the zodiac or community water resources might be counted as a term paper for biology . . . .

6. Another thing I have each kid do with transfer lettering is write and set at least one article title. Words in big letters somehow don't seem to be ordinary words. They appear out of a printing press by magic—not by man's hand. He should know that man makes those. Just because they're big doesn't mean they're any different from the words he's been using already. Only that they should be composed a little more carefully for maximum efficiency and economy. I've seen more than one kid gasp as he rubs an "E" from that plastic sheet of letters off onto a white sheet of paper, pulls the plastic back, and sees the letter sitting there staring him in the face. They love to do it.

The same Randall Williams that I talked about earlier interviewed his grandfather this year as to how he stored his potatoes for the winter back in the old days. He got stuck on the title for the article, though, and none of us could seem to help him much. We kept coming up with things like, "How to Store Potatoes for the Winter" and that kind of thing. Finally, disgusted with our lame attempts to help him, Randall took a sheet of transfer lettering off by himself into a corner, and an hour later he threw a line of type on my desk and said, "There it is." The title read, in large letters, "The First Day in the Life of a Potato Hole." He was delighted, and so that's the way it appeared over his article. Once it was set in type, and those letters were *there*, the force of it just carried us all along. It had real authority.

The same kind of learning can happen with magazines that are typeset by a printer if the teacher will only stand back and allow the kids to experiment with styles of type and sizes and instruct the printer accordingly. They don't get the impact of

watching the title grow, letter by letter, beneath their hands, but they do get smacked in the face with it when it appears over their article in the finished magazine.

7. Each student should have to go through several tedious or demanding tasks, but tasks essential to completing the article or project so that he can receive the end reward. Hopefully he will begin to realize that he does have the stamina required to go through something dull successfully and get to the other side. A good example of this sort of task is transcribing a tape. There's nothing fun about that at all after the first fifteen minutes, and my hat's off personally to the number of students we've had year after year who have been willing to transcribe the hours of tape they've brought in from interviews. Sometimes I wonder if I could have done it myself .

At any rate, the point here is for the student to see that if he wants to get to point "G", and he is going to have to get through "E" and "F" to get there, he has the ability and strength to do so. He's not going to fail in the process. He can do it successfully.

An obvious parallel exists here between this process, and going through the same sort of tedium in other classes. Another parallel that he'll be able to see, with your help at first, will be in the homes of your community contacts. In order to weave a beautiful piece of cloth, Marinda Brown has to first go through the hell of threading up her loom. John Conley (as Stan Echols saw) is so determined that the end product be good that he is willing to go through the tedium of cutting out felloes twice to make them right.

It's important to be careful here, though. It is possible to take a brand new kid and push him through too much too soon and have him throw up his hands in frustration and give up. Each kid has a different tolerance level. Since I don't know at first how much they can take, I try not to push the new ones through too much at first, and I keep their first articles limited in scope so that they can see something of theirs in print fairly

The tedium of threading up Edith Darnell's loom to weave a beautiful piece of cloth has parallels for students.

quickly. Once they've seen something in print, and they see what it is they're working toward, they begin to grow into the ability to stand more and more of the relative drudgery involved as they do longer and more complex pieces. When they get to the point where they can do those big ones, though, without your help or prodding and urging, you've made a significant contribution to their lives. If they go to college, for example, they'll find out that what they had to go through to complete a major article for your magazine is exactly what they have to go through to turn out a term paper for their history course.

As I said earlier, though, it takes some care on your part. We had a brand new kid named Cary Bogue hook up with us this year, and the thing he most wanted to do an article about was ginseng. I agreed to let him do it, but I said that since another kid some years ago had already done a short piece on the subject, what he'd need to do would be to build on that previous article and add a number of in-depth interviews to round it out and turn it into a full chapter for *Foxfire 3*. He agreed, did six

fine interviews and some solid poking around in a couple of reference works—even took some nice photographs. But when it came down to transcribing the tapes so he could begin to index and organize the information, he hit a stone wall. He got through half of one interview, and then threw up his hands and summarized what was in the other interviews. He handed in a two-page article and headed for basketball practice.

I caught him the next day and we sat down and had a talk. I told him that I thought it was going to be a real disappointment to those contacts that had been so generous with him to see their involvement treated so shoddily, and I told him I thought it was going to be a big disappointment to our subscribers too. But I knew also that it had been largely my fault for letting him get hit with so much so fast. We worked out a deal whereby I would transcribe three of the tapes for him if he would do the others. Then we'd sit down and work it up together. He agreed, and the article appeared in the Spring 1974 issue—all 21 pages of it, —and in *Foxfire 3*.

I felt it was vital for him to see that I thought the article was so important that I was willing to take some of the drudgery off his head and see him through it. That time, he needed my help. Next time, he won't.

8. I have, for each of my students, a sheet with his name on it in what we call a competence record *(see example)*. It is a check list on which each can see his progress in comparison to others. It is visible acknowledgement by others that he has become competent in a number of tasks/skills unknown to him before. As he reaches the point where he feels he is competent in a task, such as printing a photograph, a staff member or a student who has already been passed takes him into the darkroom and watches as he works. If it is obvious he knows what he's doing, the person watching checks him off, initials the blank opposite that task on the check out sheet, and that kid then becomes able to teach/check out others in that particular task.

Keys to Skills on Student Competence Record

I. **PHOTOGRAPHY**

A. Darkroom

1. Developing film
2. Contact sheets
3. Printing photographs
4. Mixing solutions - rinse jars out; scrub pans, clean up room (putting up all negatives); rinse tongs; keep paper in place and covered
5. Drying pictures
6. Care of negatives - clearing off fingerprints - putting negatives back in file

B. Care and Use of Camera

7. Loading and unloading film in camera; checking out and checking in camera, writing name, subject and date on "Film List" for films taken
8. Taking photographs - students should be able to use one of the single lens reflex cameras well
9. Taking portraits (as for personality articles)
10. Filming how-to articles
11. Lighting
12. Framing a subject, focus, etc.

II. **LAYOUT**

13. Cropping and reduction of photographs
14. Design of page
15. Pasting on text; producing and pasting on titles (line art and bars); pasting on page numbers
16. Preparation of page for printer - clean pages ready to go to press

III. **MUSEUM**

17. Labeling items and recording history of those items for museum

IV. **TAPE RECORDERS**

18. Checking equipment, testing

19. Care and clearing of tape recorders
20. Use of tape recorder in interview situation; coding of tape; where to hold microphone (how far away from person). Checking out recorder (batteries checked or extension cord ready)
21. Labeling tape; storing; filing. Filling up one tape before using another one

V. **TRANSCRIBER**

22. Care and use of transcriber; use of digital counter

VI. **HOW TO TRANSCRIBE TAPES**

23. Technique, using tape recorder or transcriber; making legible carbons of all transcriptions

VII. **INDEXING**

24. Organizing transcribed material
25. Taking out chunks you can't use, and labeling and filing the pieces you can't use so they can go into folders for future articles

VIII. **DESCRIPTION, ETC.**

26. Description, observation, introduction writing (describing environment of person, house, barn, yard, garden, etc.)

IX. **INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES**

27. Staying interested - not fidgeting; use of list of questions made up and studied beforehand; keeping the contact on the subject as long as possible. Get permission slip signed

X. **VIDEOTAPE**

28. Care and technique; playing back tapes through the monitor.
29. Actual filming, framing, editing, sound dubbing, etc.

XI. CIRCULATION

30. Letter writing; asking for information, answering questions from readers
31. Filling a subscription - getting request; filling out card and sending note to subscriber, and also gift card if indicated; putting check in proper place after you make sure all information is correct
32. Making a bank deposit - endorsing checks correctly - and listing them; adding them up
33. Bookstores - stocking with magazines or books. Includes writing invoices and filing properly
34. Filing circulation correspondence. Knowing the alphabet

XII. NEWSPAPER WRITING

35. How to write a sports article
36. How to write a news article
37. How to write an editorial
38. How to write a feature article
39. Newspaper layout

XIII. DRAWING DIAGRAMS

40. Drawing diagrams correctly, using proper proportions and correct measurements
41. Measuring, as the dimensions of a barn or a tool

XIV. MAKING A SPEECH

42. Understanding the history, purpose and ideas of the *Foxfire* organization
43. Writing and giving speeches about it and other related subjects

XV. KNOWLEDGE OF NON-PROFIT TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS

44. The way IDEAS works; the way *Foxfire* is set up: Board of Directors, etc.
45. Copyright forms and other legal documents

A Sample Competence Sheet

_____is proficient in:

I.	Photography		
	A. Darkroom	1. ____	Checked by: ____
		2. ____	Checked by: ____
		3. ____	Checked by: ____
		4. ____	Checked by: ____
		5. ____	Checked by: ____
		6. ____	Checked by: ____
	B. Care & use of cameras	7. ____	Checked by: ____
		8. ____	Checked by: ____
		9. ____	Checked by: ____
		10. ____	Checked by: ____
		11. ____	Checked by: ____
		12. ____	Checked by: ____
II.	Layout	13. ____	Checked by: ____
		14. ____	Checked by: ____
		15. ____	Checked by: ____
		16. ____	Checked by: ____
III.	Museum	17. ____	Checked by: ____
IV.	Tape Recorders	18. ____	Checked by: ____
		19. ____	Checked by: ____
		20. ____	Checked by: ____
		21. ____	Checked by: ____
V.	Transcriber	22. ____	Checked by: ____
VI.	How to transcribe tapes	23. ____	Checked by: ____
VII.	Indexing techniques	24. ____	Checked by: ____
		25. ____	Checked by: ____

VIII.	Description, etc.	26. ____	Checked by: ____
IX.	Interviewing techniques	27. ____	Checked by: ____
X.	Videotape	28. ____	Checked by: ____
		29. ____	Checked by: ____
XI.	Circulation	30. ____	Checked by: ____
		31. ____	Checked by: ____
		32. ____	Checked by: ____
		33. ____	Checked by: ____
		34. ____	Checked by: ____
XII.	Newspaper writing	35. ____	Checked by: ____
		36. ____	Checked by: ____
		37. ____	Checked by: ____
		38. ____	Checked by: ____
		39. ____	Checked by: ____
XIII.	Drawing diagrams	40. ____	Checked by: ____
		41. ____	Checked by: ____
XIV.	Making a speech	42. ____	Checked by: ____
		43. ____	Checked by: ____
XV.	Knowledge of non-profit organizations	44. ____	Checked by: ____
		45. ____	Checked by: ____

Some students genuinely like the feeling they get as they watch the blanks beside the skills get filled in and initialed. Others seem not to need this sort of stimulation or encouragement, and simply go their own way learning how to do everything and forget to ever get the sheets filled out. Either approach is fine with us. It's just there for the kids that need it anyway.

9. I like each student to teach or demonstrate a skill he knows to several students who don't know it. A student learns how to record subscriptions, and then teaches that same skill to several other kids who don't.

But it can be taken farther than that. If Harry Brown shows a kid how to bottom a chair using corn shucks and lets him do it himself, a fine moment can occur when that same kid holds the class spellbound and shows them how it's done. This reinforces the idea that he can teach skills to others, and because he knows those skills and they don't, he deserves their attention. It also leads him into the realization that he should be generous enough to share that skill just as it was shared with him and not hold onto it for himself alone. He should want to share the experience he just had—the skills he just learned.

Along the same lines, we have our students recap their trips to the rest of the class so those kids can share their experiences also. One important benefit of this activity is that those who went on the trip also are able to tell the rest of the class the sorts of questions they were asked by interviewers or reporters or teachers thus helping the others get ready for similar experiences so they won't find themselves in embarassing situations. We do this as a matter of course after each interview or trip—whether it was a five-minute radio interview in Toccoa or a speech before a House Subcommittee in Washington—for we want the kids to know that no matter what the occasion, each, in our opinion, is important.

A side benefit of this analysis of the questions they were asked is that it gets the kids actively analyzing what they're doing and for what reasons. When a reporter gets them in a corner and says, "What do you think you can learn from doing the sort of work you're doing with *Foxfire* that you probably wouldn't learn in one of your ordinary high school classes?" it gets them thinking. By being able to tell others why they think a contact is important to them, or why they think the work they are doing is valuable, they reinforce in their own minds the value of the project they're engaged in.

Sometimes they also improve their own skills as interviewers. During a recent workshop in Parkersburg, West Virginia, I was told that a young local newspaper reporter wanted to come in at two that afternoon to interview me about what I was doing there. I decided I'd ask him to interview the group of students I had been working with instead since we'd just spent the morning discussing interviewing techniques. Before he arrived, I told the students to watch him as he questioned them: watch mannerisms, his method of note-taking and questioning, etc.

After he had left, the reaction of the kids was immediate as they began picking apart his style: "Do you remember that question about the administration? What was that supposed to mean? I couldn't even understand it." Or, "Did you see when he looked at his watch? It was like we were boring him."

I can think of several mistakes those kids won't be making when they head out into the field.

10. We have each kid do at least one layout—hopefully the layout for an article he has written. The layout is visible proof of his growing professionalism/competence, and his ability to create something consciously that is attractive and effective (out of his own desire to make it attractive and effective). He should be able to demonstrate why he chose to crop a photograph a certain way and place it in a particular position on the page in juxtaposition to a piece of text or another photograph or a title. The idea, again, is to show them that they have the power to act consciously to bring something fine into being.

11. I've found that one of the most powerful tools at our disposal is videotape. Television is so powerful a medium that most kids never get the sense that it is created by *people* like themselves. Like print, it is almost as if it were handed down from on high by some unseen, unapproachable force. But stu-

dents can do it too and become just as articulate in this form of communication as they are in print. The programs they see each night are thought out, filmed, edited, and put together by people doing the same thing, roughly, with the same equipment they've got to work with, and I've seen student work in this medium that would stand up any day against some of the pap that comes from professionals.

Videotape has the added advantage of being a catalyst for lots of other activities, and for making lots of other friends. When we were filming in a Holiness Church where members of the congregation held rattlesnakes and copperheads to prove their faith, we found we were having some trouble relating to the members there after the services were over. They each drifted away before we could get to them, and we really wanted some interviews with them alone, out of that context.

One afternoon, during a break in one of the services, a man came over to us and asked when he would be able to see what we had filmed. We told him that he could see it now if he wanted, for our unit has a review capability that allows you to see what you've filmed while you're still in the field. He watched through the camera's eyepiece as one of the films rolled through and his exclamations brought others over who looked also, and before long most of the congregation had gathered around. Then the questions began to come as to who we were and what we were going to do with the tapes, for none of them had been told since we had worked through the preacher alone to get permission to be allowed into the church. Within a half hour we had a list of people we could talk to that, had we followed them all up, would have kept us there for weeks.

In addition, there's the benefit of other kids in the class who couldn't go on the interview being able to see the tape in class the next day, and have the kid who made it explaining to them what he was trying to capture, and what technical problems he may have run into.

Photograph left: A Foxfire contact, Minyard Conner, watches himself on a video tape the kids just made. To his left, "Wig" (Eliot Wigginton) and Chuck Anderson from the Center for Understanding Media in New York. Directly behind Minyard is his grandson Eddie, one of Wig's students.

And you get genuinely human things happening. After Bill Lamb died, for example, Ethel Corn wanted to come into the office and see the Bill Lamb videotapes because she wanted the chance to see Bill again. I had the kid who made the tapes show them for her, and it was a truly moving experience.

12. I like each student to work on at least one article during his first phase, in which he has to create—in words and diagrams and photographs—a set of instructions for doing some skill that someone else will be able to follow with no difficulty.

The student who learned from Aunt Arie to bottom a chair with corn shucks, for example, would first demonstrate that skill to the class. Then after he had printed all his photographs and transcribed his tape, he would set out to write a set of instructions for that skill that a magazine subscriber could follow. Then he might call in a classmate and ask him to read the instructions and see how close he could come to making them work.

We've had many occasions where a student has had to go back to a contact to get an additional set of photographs because the first set wasn't clear enough. For one exasperating article (on how to make corn shuck dolls), the student went

back twice and still didn't have the photos she needed. She knew how to do it well enough herself, however, so that she was able to get one of the students from the class to photograph her hands as she went through the steps instead of making the contact do it again, and so finally, on the third try, she got what she needed.

It was important that she go through all that for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that she, at that point, was the only one who knew how to make the dolls and thus was vital to the successful completion of the article. It couldn't have been done without her (without starting all over again with new kids). She was genuinely important to our project.

13. We have our own stationery for Foxfire, and that seems to be psychologically important for the kids we work with. It's their project, and they have their own office and their own stationery . . . It really makes a difference.

One of the things I do with that stationery is have each kid write at least one letter (most write far more than that) and get a response, the idea being that if a response comes, the kid is obviously important enough to deserve one. A part of one of our bulletin boards is set aside for letters that come in for specific editors, and we tack them up there, obviously unopened. That's the first place lots of our kids go when they come to our office each day.

For some of the kids, the letters are just a one-shot moment (a letter to a Senator in support of a piece of upcoming legislation, or a request to a library for a copy of a magazine article that may have been printed several years ago in some magazine the kid does not have access to). For others, it becomes a year-long involvement. Three girls, for example, are respon-

sible for answering a large portion of my correspondence for me. They deal with almost all the letters that I feel I don't have to attend to personally, and it keeps them jumping. Often, however, the people they answer write back again to their attention thanking them for taking the time to answer so fully and so considerately.

Positive responses from "outside" can be triggered in numerous other ways, of course. When a student handles an interview completely by himself (most do this anyway), he must get the contact to react to him because of him alone—and not because a teacher asked the contact to talk with him as a special favor, and the contact simply feels he must oblige.

Sometimes a good moment occurs when the student has to set the interview up by phone, and has to explain himself and his project without benefit of props like magazines and photographs. When we were doing an issue on banjo makers, we found that one of the people we most wanted to talk with was a Dave Pickett, in Winston-Salem, some five and one-half hours away by car. Ray McBride who was the student in charge of the issue finally got him by phone, explained what we were doing, and had him agree to an interview. Since Ray was too young to drive, I had to take him, and so it was Ray's work that set many things in motion—among them my having to get everything in order here so that I could be away from the office for two days to get him up to Winston-Salem. Ray was an important enough person that he not only was worth two days of my undivided time and energy, but was also worth a day of Dave's. He knew he was engaged in an important project when he found he could make that much happen of his own volition (and, knowing we probably couldn't get back up there again any time soon, he had to make a special effort to make sure all photographs were perfect and wouldn't have to be retaken).

Most students demand reactions of some sort from the world around them. Those who can't get the reactions in any other way get them by disrupting/misbehaving/shocking—forcing the attention of others to them. Or they withdraw shyly assuming that they're not worth responding to. A letter addressed to

them from someone they've never met, or a strange voice on the phone saying, "Sure, I'd be glad to talk to you," can make a big difference.

14. I feel during this stage a student should reach the point where he is not only competent, but reasonably *comfortable* with equipment like tape recorders and cameras. He *knows* he can use them. We know he can too, and so our next step is to trust him with that equipment to the point where he can take it home at nights or on week-ends to use. All he has to do is sign it out. Many kids we work with can't believe this at first. They can't believe we'll turn them loose in the darkroom alone, even after they've received instruction. In my opinion, the cost of the equipment is nothing compared to the toll that's taken in self-confidence when a kid is not trusted. I won't allow our operation to work any other way, and in nine years of doing this, we have yet to lose a single piece of equipment.

15. Linked to the above is my belief that a student should also be allowed to order through a business supply house or a local establishment the equipment and supplies he needs to accomplish a certain task. The students we work with place all their own orders for office supplies like index cards, rubber cement, transfer lettering, staples, paper, film, tapes, chemicals, etc. And when the bills come in, they sign the checks which draw on the account into which they deposit all our income.

When the kids decided that our next step should be to buy, with book royalties, our own piece of land, we did that. A check was written for $35,000, and a fourteen year old kid signed it.

Level II

Growing, Reinforcing, Checking Bases

Essentially the same goals are in force here as in the first level, but my practice is to step up the intensity a little so that the student is not only sure he is competent in a number of skills, but is now actively looking beyond himself to the needs of others.

As in the first phase, I use some behind-the-scenes work that the student is usually not aware of—at least at this time. It is a phase that has to be handled with some sensitivity.

Throughout the following activities, there are references to "keys" that may prove helpful. These keys refer back to previous moments which may help you see that many of the activities are interrelated and build upon each other. Many other correlations will be spotted as you get farther into this, but the keys that are provided may give you the idea and get you started.

The Activities

1. At this point a magazine should appear so that each of the students who has finished an article sees his name in print, and finally has something he can carry with him to show to his

parents, peers and neighbors (and mail to relatives, subscribers and reviewers). Now he has something tangible and permanent to show for the work he did during level one. If the student hasn't finished a full article, the purpose may be served by having his name appear in a credit line beneath a photograph, a sentence in the inside front cover that gives him credit for designing the cover, etc. *(Key: I, 3).*

2. He might receive, at this point, praise/attention from someone who normally would not be expected to notice him unless he were in disciplinary or scholastic trouble and set up for a good dose of criticism.

One of the covert things I sometimes do is approach someone like the principal, and specifically request that he stop one or two of the kids (who could use it most) as he sees them in the hall and tell them that he noticed their work in the new issue and enjoyed it. Our principal would be inclined to do this anyway. But when I have a kid who really could use that sort of support because he's down for one reason or another, or losing ground, I approach the principal and ask for his help.

There are times also when, working quietly, I try to change one of my colleague's attitudes toward a student of mine. The student might be failing English, for example, and seemingly unable to get out from behind the teacher's conviction that he is incapable of producing anything at all; and so I make sure that that student gets an article into the magazine as soon as possible, and then make sure, in a casual manner, that that article gets into the hands of his English teacher.

I remember several times when a number of my colleagues were grumbling about a kid, and telling the principal that he ought to be suspended for a week or two. On two of those occasions, I was able to get the kid away from school on some sort of a speaking engagement for a day or two, and then set it up so that he could talk about the trip in front of an assembly or

school gathering, and then get an article about the trip and what it accomplished placed in the local newspaper. Often not only would the student's attitude improve at a crucial time, but my colleagues would begin to think that he had turned an important corner.

Once I had one of the worst kids in school in my class, and I took him with me, after some work and some coaching, to the local Rotary Club to talk about what we were doing. The Club membership included our principal, as well as the superintendent of schools for the county. The group was visibly impressed, as was the newspaper reporter that covered the talk, and things began to happen for that kid. The superintendent, not knowing the kid's reputation, came up to the principal afterwards and said something like, "That's a fine young man you've got there. You're lucky to have students like that in your school . . ."

It's got to be done carefully, though. The last thing you want any student to think is that you're playing with him, and setting him up for honors that he doesn't deserve. That will destroy instantly any benefit that could have come from your efforts in his behalf *(Key: I, 3 and I, 13)*.

3. Each kid should deliver personally to the contact(s) he worked with copies of the magazine as his way of thanking them for taking some time with him. It should be a giving of a piece of himself to them, an, "I did this about you, and I'm proud of it, and I wanted you to see it and have it." The contact should be allowed to have as many copies of the magazine (and as many prints of the photographs) as he wants for sending to family, etc. *(Key: I, 1 and 3)*.

I also insist that when we are putting a publication together and are about to work into it one of the personality articles, or an article that includes a good bit of transcription from any

contact, the students working with me have to offer the contact the chance to make additions or deletions before it is published. This gives us the chance to take better photos if the contact would like, or change any inaccuracies, or give him time to expand on some point that he really wants to enforce—or even to say that he'd rather not have the article appear at all. At this point, the ego of the student who wrote the article should be less important than the feelings of the contact about it, about how he wants to be presented to the world.

4. I feel it is also important at this time that the student begin to be comfortable enough with his own capacities and skills that he can instruct others *(Key: I, 9 and I, 12)*. Involved here is not only his growing self-confidence, but a growing generosity with the skills he has and the experiences he's had. He might give a younger (or slower) kid instruction in the darkroom, for example, so that that kid can feel the same glow from that moment that he felt once.

We usually try to choose two or three exceptional students—exceptional in the sense that they really have a knack for photography, and are really at home in the lab—to be in charge of it each year and handle much of the instruction that goes on there. They make sure that the room is kept clean, and that fresh chemicals are always available, and that whenever their supplies are running low, more are ordered. With a little work, they become fine, sensitive instructors, and I suspect the new kids learn technique more quickly and more forcefully from them than they ever could from me.

As part of this, the students should also be able to give instructions to an adult and expect to have them carried out—a means of reinforcing still more strongly their feelings of competence. They might be instructions to a printer as to how to

handle an article; instructions to a shopkeeper as to how to stock the magazines; even instructions to the teacher in some form. My older kids often tell me that even though I feel an article is ready for press, they do not, and they insist that I hold it until a later date for publication. Or, like Ray McBride, they will tell me that it's important to go to Winston-Salem if the article is to be all it could be, and I wind up being gone from school for two days. I don't think that everything he does *has* to be on a "May I please sir?" basis. He should have proved by now that in some areas, at least, he is allowed/expected/trusted to proceed on his own, using the teacher as the tool, facilitator and string-puller he was meant to be. He has earned that right.

There are many other variations on this theme that I see happening around me, and it always gives me a good feeling—a feeling that everything is going just as it should. Several weeks ago, for example, one of the administrators of the school came down to our office with a rush job that he had been putting off and now had to complete immediately. It involved the printing of some photographs and a complete layout—camera ready—of some pages to go to the printer for this year's commencement program. He wanted me to give him my "expert" help (as he phrased it) because this had to be done fast and it had to be done right. When I told him that he had caught me at a particularly bad time but that one of my students probably would be glad to help him, he went pale. "This is really important," he said. That just made the situation an even more attractive one to plug a kid into. I got one of our younger kids who had already proved herself, and she took him into the darkroom and taught him how to print, himself, the photos he would need. "When you get them finished," she said, "come on out and I'll show you how to work them into a layout and set up your titles."

He went ahead and finished his photos (she went in with him to reprint one that needed some improvement) and then they did the layout, and late that afternoon he walked out of our office on his way to the printer with a somewhat different notion of what it was we were all about, and of what was happening down there in those offices of ours.

Kids grow so fast. On June 1 of 1973, we had hired three girls that were old *Foxfire* veterans to go to work for us that summer following their high school graduation. Their job was to turn out a series of articles of a social nature—investigations of things that were going on in the county that would affect many of our residents—thus initiating a whole new direction for our magazine. By the end of the summer, they had decided to stay on for a year through July 1, 1974, and postpone their college careers temporarily. The last seven months were spent in an intensive look at the Betty's Creek Valley and how pressures from the outside had altered the quality of life there. My plan was to run their completed survey/investigation in installments in *Foxfire* in special centerfold inserts that would span three or four issues. In anticipation of that, I began to promise the upcoming series to readers.

The series completed and ready to run, Laurie, Barbara and Mary came in as a group and told me that they felt that to break the article up into installments would rob it of the considerable force it had as a unit. They wanted to run it as one entire issue of the magazine, and not break it up at all. I said that that would be impossible for I had already promised the subscribers that it would appear in installments, and if we printed it as one issue, they would think they were being cheated for they would have gotten the installments free as a bonus inside their regular issues, and now they were having to accept it as one of the issues in their subscription. Besides, the other kids had already gotten the rest of the year's issues finished and ready for press, and I didn't see how an extra issue could possibly be worked in financially or in terms of time. Suddenly we'd be printing 1975's issues before the summer of 1974. That seemed crazy.

They went away, and two days later returned. They said they'd given it serious thought, and they still could not accept the installment idea. It just wouldn't work. Period. It would have to be an exclusive issue.

At first I was irritated, but then I began to see that they were doing just what I had been training them to do for years, and that the work I had done with them was taking hold. They had considered all my arguments carefully, and had weighed them

Laurie Brunson, tape recorder slung over her shoulder, interviewing Claude Darnell for the Betty's Creek issue.

as objectively as they could, and had hashed them all over at length, but in the end they had found that my position just wasn't acceptable. They really believed in the project they had just completed, and in the effect it could have as a single issue, and they were standing up for their right to have it run as such.

I relented, finally. Then threw out some comment like, "I hate people that stand up for their convictions," and we all laughed, and it was done. Looking back on it all, I couldn't be more pleased at the way it turned out. That really was one hell of an issue, and our subscribers just have to understand. . . .

5. Students who have come through the first level should now be able to take constructive criticism or questioning or challenging without feeling threatened. A kid's article in the new issue might be subjected to class scrutiny, for example, putting him in the position of having to defend why he did something in a certain way, and what he hoped the effect of doing it that way would be. Then the class can respond as to whether or not they thought his ideas worked, and *why* they worked, or failed.

He should be able to evaluate his own work objectively, and honestly admit that a part of it might not have come out as he had hoped it would—and learn from that (as would the other members of the class).

And using that experience as a base, he should also begin to develop the capacity to look at the work of other kids and criticize *it* constructively and sensitively, always being aware of the fact that there are many ways to solve a problem, and that one kid's way might be just as effective as the way he would have done it.

He should never take the stance, "I *know* better than you and so you should listen to me," but should work from the position of, "I've had the same experience, and I tried it this way and like it, but lots of other ways might apply." The "Let's try it together and see what happens" approach is better here, I think, for both the student/teacher relationship and the student/peer relationship.

I've had lots of good times with exercises that illustrate to my kids that there's not usually one way, and one way alone to do something. One thing I've tried is giving each kid one page, one piece of text, one title and two photographs (all identical) and asked them to create their own, one-page layouts and be able to explain and justify them. Many of the layouts come out

differently, and many are just as good as others. Certain weak points will be spotted in some, and agreed upon as weak by most of the class, but they'll be surprised at how many *good* solutions there are to the problem.

Another I've tried is to put all the kids outdoors, tell them not to talk to each other, and get them each to write down the three things they spot that most impress them. One might see a factory belching smoke. Another might look at the same scene and see, instead, a 100-year old oak. Still another might see a corn patch, or a Chevrolet pick-up truck. Each will be impressed by different things according to his own personality/interests/concerns; and each impression is equally valid, though some may be more powerful or significant than others.

Going even further, it's sometimes fun to ask the class to respond to a scene the way they think one of their classmates might respond. What things out there would most catch Joe's eye or would imprint most forcefully? What things would he react to the most strongly?

Or I give them all the same photograph and ask them to crop it for maximum effectiveness and power, and note how many different solutions they come up with.

I have students who develop photographs in different ways. Some, like Annette Sutherland, keep the enlarger light on full force and expose the paper for four or five seconds. Others, like Gary Warfield, will take the same negative, cut the light down all the way, and increase the exposure to as much as 20 seconds or more. Both can come out of the darkroom with a fine print, made from the same negative, but using different techniques. There is no *one* way in most cases.

A high point in this activity would come when a more experienced student might be working with a newer one as a team on the same article, and the elder would accept suggestions from the younger in an attempt to develop the younger's level-one competence (just as the teacher once accepted suggestions from *him*). He might not *think* the suggestions quite as good as those he could have come up with, but he would realize that they are certainly workable—*maybe* even as good. If the

suggestion is genuinely off base, he should be able to help the younger correct it sensitively; but if it's a *good* one, he should be generous enough to accept it and not try to impose his own will over the entire project. He should already know that his own suggestions are good, and he should not feel that he now has to be the authority. He should have enough self-confidence himself to allow others to begin to develop theirs, and not feel threatened by that development.

6. A corollary to the above is that he should now be generous enough to be able to give praise freely rather than feeling resentment when he knows someone has done as well as he. Genuine praise is a complex thing, but I've watched it evolve naturally hundreds of times when the atmosphere surrounding the project has been conducive. In part, praise involves being self-confident enough so that you no longer have to have all the praise yourself, but can give it lovingly to others. It also has to do with self-esteem, and the fact that you believe that you are worthy of giving praise at all—that the fact that you took the time to praise someone may make a difference in their day because they think you're special, (and competent) and they therefore think your opinions are special.

One of the nice experiences I've had is watching one of the basketball stars like Roy Dickerson (who's worked with us for two years) slap one of the younger kids like Steve Smith (who idolizes him) on the back and say something like, "Man, you're really coming along. That's a nice piece of work!" The kid just glows, and I just sit there and don't say anything—just watch it work its magic.

As in several previous activities, this may also, at first, take some behind the scenes teacher prodding. This is the point at which a "together" kid like Roy might be let in on some of your professional tricks, and might be encouraged to try some of them on a kid like Steve who just may need a boost from someone like Roy at that point in his life. Whether or not you tell

Roy that you also pulled some of the same things on him two years ago depends a lot on whether or not you think it's important, and whether or not it would serve any purpose, and whether or not the kid would benefit from knowing that—or would just be hurt. The last thing you want is for a kid like Roy to come away from one of those sessions thinking that much of the praise he once got was contrived. It depends a lot on the kid—but doesn't everything?

7. It would be good at this point if the kid got a response to his work from outside the community to illustrate forcefully to him that there is another world out there, and that some of the people that live in it are watching and delighting in the project he's a part of. It might be a letter from a subscriber saying how much they enjoyed his particular article, or it might be specific mention of it in a review in a newspaper from outside the area. I usually read them in class, sometimes I even bring in a huge basket of letters before they've been filed and let the kids who don't handle much of the mail pore over them for an entire class period noting the postmarks, the comments, the questions —getting some feel for the number of people out there that are watching (and eagerly waiting for the next issue) *(Key: I, 13)*.

Here again, the idea is not only to see that he continues to get praise and encouragement to reaffirm his growing conviction that he has real worth himself; but also that there are other people out there and he has a responsibility to *them*. Both go hand in hand *(Key: II, 3, 4, 5, 6)*.

8. Instead of doing an article by himself this time, he should be encouraged to team himself with another in a cooperative relationship that involves genuine sharing. It might be with a younger kid who is just coming through Level One, or it might

be with an equal peer/friend. Some new students will already be at the point when you get them that they can start right off working in teams of two or more students. It depends a good bit on how they feel about themselves, and how they feel about their abilities. I've had cases where I've put kids together in a team, and have had one completely dominate the other simply because he knows a little more, or is a little more aggressive. The weaker ends up retreating, and contributing nothing to the team (and learning nothing as a consequence). Teams should be approached with caution, I feel; but I also feel I haven't done all I could have done for a kid until I've gotten him to the point where he can work comfortably in a team as an equal partner—giving and sharing and receiving.

Usually an article put together by a team is larger in scope than one done by a single kid. It might be an article that involves three interviews on the same subject, for example, as opposed to one interview on how to bottom a chair. They might find three or four contacts who do the same skill in three different ways, like raising ginseng, or making moonshine *(Key: II, 5)*. In such a situation, each student might transcribe one tape, each might be responsible for the photographs taken of one contact, and then all would work together on the indexing and organizing of the information and on the layout itself.

9. Each should answer several questions from the outside knowing that he is an integral enough part of the operation to be able to speak for it. I mentioned before the three girls who answer many of my letters for me—I trust them to speak for all of us. At times, I get those girls to spread the letters around to other kids who haven't had that experience yet, and work with those kids to help them get answers written. Sometimes, they team up with another kid or two to handle a particularly complex request. A man may write in, for example, and ask if we would be willing to track down for him the site where his grandfather was buried in our county, and get a picture of the site for him. Another might ask if we would talk to the local

blacksmiths and see if any of them would be willing to make him a buggy wheel of certain dimensions, or a full wagon, complete with harness and seat. The kids head out into the country and see what they can come up with, and then get back in touch.

Kids at this level are also the ones who handle our copyrighting, send in the actual bank deposits, and make major purchases pretty much on their own. They are the magazine, and they have earned the right to carry out its business, and shape the face it shows to the world.

10. I like to encourage these more experienced kids to have deeper interactions with people in the county - interactions that really do symbolize a giant step forward in their growth and development. This year, for example, I had two girls from a family that was genuinely racist. Recently, I encouraged them to do a personality article about Beulah Perry, a black woman

Vivian Burrell and Beverly Justus on each side of Beulah Perry.

we had worked with several times in the past. There was some hesitation, but after they'd met her, they began to work, interviewing her five or six times. By the end of the article, they were so fond of her that when it came time to design the issue that would carry the article, they not only wanted her picture on the cover, but wanted it to be the photograph of the two of them standing beside her—Beulah in the center—with their arms around her waist. It was a nice moment for me to watch them zero in on that photograph as being their favorite.

Other great moments, for me, have occurred during the workshops that *Ideas* has sponsored here in Rabun County. One summer there were in attendance kids and their teachers from all over the country; blacks, Alaskan Indians, Chicanos, etc. The way they all grew together and interrelated and formed lasting friendships by the time the workshop was over was one of the fine experiences of my life. I'll never forget it.

Level III

Beyond Self

The assumption here is that the student is now truly capable of making more than just beginning stabs at moving beyond himself to a sensitive awareness of others. He should develop and deepen here not only a concern for his own peers, but also a concern for the younger students following him, for the school, and indeed for the community as a whole. He should see himself as a valuable enough individual to be able to make a difference in the lives of those students, or in the life of the community at large. And even beyond feeling competent to affect those things, he should feel an obligation to being responsive to them. This is a tremendously complex phase, but potentially a most significant one. It both *builds on* and further enhances the student's self-confidence and sense of worth.

As I said earlier, you may have students who right from the beginning are at this phase in their lives, but still do not have their hands on the tools that are made available to them in level one. Accept that fact in them, get them the tools, and then sit back and watch them work. They can be the most fun of all.

The Activities

1. The students should want to go back to previous contacts (such as in I, 1) not for information or to get help but to provide help.

Since we began interviewing Aunt Arie, for example, the kids have wanted to go up to her house to do anything for her she'll let them do: to till her ground, plant it, tend the garden, harvest the crop, can her food, clean the house, help her cook —or even just go up to visit and keep her company. When she

Kids helping Aunt Arie (in background wearing scarf) dig her potatoes.

was in the hospital for an operation recently, a constant flood of kids came to see her. There were so many, in fact, that the nurses finally put up a sign on her door that read, "Please, only two visitors at a time." Now she's staying with relatives, and the kids still visit *(Key: II, 3)*.

As kids grow in their awareness that the *Foxfire* vehicle can be a powerful tool for helping, they should begin to stretch their wings. I've seen them do amazing things:

When the JFG Coffee Company decided this spring that it needed a new set of commercials, the Fitzgerald Advertising Agency was hired to make them. The plan was to have six commercials, each featuring a mountain person (in the JFG marketing area) demonstrating some skill. At the end of the 30-second scene, all the person had to say was something to the effect that, "It takes a lot of skill and patience to do this." Then the announcer would come in and say, "Just as it takes _____ time and patience to make butter, so too it takes JFG time and patience to make a fine coffee." Something like that.

Thinking they might be able to save filming time, and save trouble, they approached us and asked if we would be willing to locate the subjects for the commercials and have them prepared so that all the film crew would have to do would be walk in, film the six scenes in four days, and walk out. We told them the kids might be willing to do that, but they would have to come up and present their case and let the kids decide.

The writer and producer flew up from New Orleans, and I gave them a class period to present their story boards to the kids and answer questions. The kids wanted to know if *Foxfire*'s name would be used (they didn't want it to be), or if the name of the county would be used (they didn't want that either after seeing the number of tourists that came through as a result of *Deliverance*), or if the contacts would have to drink some coffee (they didn't want them to). They also wanted to know how much each would be paid, how long they would have to work, etc. They grilled the ad agency representatives for an hour, then told them they would talk about it among themselves and let the agency know next week. The two men returned to New Orleans.

For several days, that was all they talked about. Finally they decided that they'd let the commercials be made *if* they could find people in the community that wanted to do it. They headed out to locate a butter churner, a beekeeper, a man who would plow with a horse, some quilters, a weaver, someone who would dig sassafras and make tea with it—all skills the ad agency wanted pictured. In two days they had found them all, and so they called the agency and said that they could come if *if* they paid the people in cash just as soon as the cameras stopped rolling, and would give us copies of the finished commercials for our archive.

The agency agreed, came in, and the kids had it set up so they got all they came for in four days. The contacts got paid ($300.00 apiece on the spot), and everyone was happy. The thing that pleased me the most, however, was the way the kids located the contacts to be filmed.

I overheard them making up the lists of people to be asked, and the first consideration in every case was, "Is that someone who can *really* use the money? We don't want to get people who don't really *need* it."

When it was all over, the response back from the contacts was something to watch. Oakley Justice, the man who had plowed his field with a horse for them, came up and said, "I just want you all to know that I am really grateful to you for thinking of me. That's the most money I ever made at one time in my life, and that will pay for my seed and fertilizer and put me in the black for the first time in years." Ditto the others.

The kids also found a talented young songwriter in our county. His name is Varney Watson, and he's just barely making it, his job in the rug mill the only support for his wife and three children. The kids began publishing his songs in the magazine and getting them copyrighted for him, and the word began to get around. This year, Varney was invited to a songwriter's conference at the Highlander Center in Knoxville, and was also asked to perform at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife in July. It appears that finally, Varney will begin to get the kind of recognition he deserves.

And when the kids found out later this year that he needed a new guitar, they decided to pay him retroactively for the songs he had allowed *Foxfire* to publish, thus getting him enough cash for the guitar he now plays.

An article that Ray McBride did about Charles Earnhardt, a whittler, had a dual purpose, to discuss the art of whittling and show off his work, but also to get his business going to the point where he could make enough money to buy back his father's old farm in North Carolina. Every letter that came into our office for Charles as a result of the article, Ray forwarded to him with growing excitement. Charles has now been able, partially through Ray's efforts, to make the first payments on the family property.

As the kids found more and more craftsmen in the area who had things to sell, they began to search for a way to get the word out to our subscribers. Finally, they decided to start a free classified ads section in the back of our magazine. They'd take a

Anita Jenkins, Tom Carlton and Bit Carver helping Millard Buchanan build a rail fence.

picture of the item and the craftsman, run the ad, and as the orders came in, fill them, give the craftsman the whole check, and ship the items out free of charge to him. They took no cut. The craftsmen got 100% of the purchase price. Using this technique they sold froes for John Conley; shuttles for Claude Darnell; rings, puzzles and walking sticks for Kenny Runion; quilts for Edith Darnell, etc.

I could go on with story after story, but I think the point is made. The more my students can use our operation and their own ingenuity to better the lot of those around them, the happier I'll be.

2. Each student should take an active part in teaching those who are coming in behind to make sure the experiences the new staff members have as they move through the first two phases are positive ones *(Key: II, 4)*. It is at this point that the teacher can really reap the benefits of some careful groundwork, and really see things begin to come together. At this point, the teacher should be more like an orchestra conductor than one who transfers skills such as photography or interviewing techniques. The teacher should be able to let the older students handle the bulk of this responsibility, and should concentrate on building relationships between students and on staging entrees for the students into the community *(Key II, 2 and II, 6)*.

I know I'm getting somewhere when the brighter kids I have "adopt" some of the slower ones, include them in their work and their activities and their triumphs and attempt to pass on to them all they know. The patience of some of those brighter kids, once they see the purpose of their work, is astounding, and they make more good things happen for those other kids than I could ever make happen alone.

I have with me at this moment in my house two kids who are spending the week-end with me because they can't get transportation home for the summer until next week. One of them

does not work for *Foxfire*, and is one of the most unpopular students on the campus, being somewhat effeminate, shy and withdrawn. The other, Ray McBride, does. Ray's very much an average, All-American type kid, and I knew he wasn't overjoyed at the thought of having to stay with this particular classmate for the week-end; but when I told him I could use his help, and that I needed him to help entertain this kid so that I could be left alone for a while to work on this document, he pitched in with no trouble at all. All day, he's been overdoing himself to give Jeff a decent time; they've walked all over our hundred acres of land, they've worked in the garden stringing up fence to keep the rabbits out, and they've cut some water ditches in the gravel road. I've caught glimpses of them all along, working together, laughing. Ray's done a lot of growing up in the last few years, and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to watch him. He's turned into someone special—someone fine.

Teachers should contribute to and stimulate this kind of relationship not only for the ultimate good of the slower kid, but also for the growth of the stronger.

3. Each student, if possible, should be given the opportunity to represent the project by giving a speech or helping to conduct a workshop or granting an interview either at some major function or at a location some distance away from the school, hopefully a location they have to fly to *(Key: II, 9)*. Thanks to the number of invitations we get, I am able to do this fairly often, and I am always impressed by the way the students handle themselves (and amazed at how little they know of the world outside their county. Most of the students I take on trips have never flown before, and many of them have never been in a city, never been in an elevator or on an escalator, and never eaten in a fine restaurant).

Standing before a group of strangers far from home and representing (being trusted to represent) a project they care about

Barbara Taylor speaking before the annual convention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C. Ginny Rutgers and Dina Williams wait their turn, while Annette Reems dines at the head table. (Photo by National Trust for Historic Preservation)

is a moment they'll carry with them always. I remember, for example, a time when I took Annette Reems to New Orleans, wined and dined her at the Court of Two Sisters, and then let her speak to a group of about 1,500 college teachers. She won them all. Or the time I flew Barbara Taylor and several other editors to Berkeley, California for a three-day conference and workshop. Barbara refused to eat because the food was all so strange, but she delighted everyone she talked with (we finally saved her life with a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken). Or the time I flew Ray and Annette Sutherland out to Laramie, Wyoming to address the Wyoming English teachers, and we got fogged in and had to charter a Piper Cub out of Laramie to Denver to remake all our reservations from there. The kids returned home having received a standing ovation at the talk in Lara-

mie: having fielded questions for hours afterwards during the social gathering there: and then having had the additional excitement of a charter plane ride out over the Rockies. It's always that way—the experience of *representing the project* before strangers is forceful by itself, but the additional unexpected things that happen to those trips is what brings many of the real benefits. It's hard to match that kind of experience at the local Rotary Club.

4. Each of the more experienced students should deal in a team with several other students, with an article that has real scope, and requires multiple interviews, lengthy tape transcriptions, and numerous photographs (portraits, how to do it photos, landscapes, etc.). It should be very much like a full-fledged piece of research along the lines of term papers he may get in college *(Key: I, 6 and II, 8)*.

Good examples of the sort of article I'm speaking of include moonshining and log cabin building, both of which appear in *The Foxfire Book*; or the section on spinning and weaving that will be found in *Foxfire 2*. We had students this year working for almost an entire year on subjects that will fill whole issues of the magazine: a history of the Talullah Falls Railroad, and banjo making in the mountains. Some of those topics get hideously complicated, and when they finish a project like that, both they and you know they have arrived.

Inevitably, in this sort of major undertaking, students will suffer disappointments and failures. Sometimes they will have to go back to a contact several times for additional information that they should have gotten the first time, but didn't. Sometimes they have to repeat entire interviews. Sometimes they get to the end of the article, and realize with a shudder that they still haven't done enough, that the subject is only partially exhausted. Then it's back to the road. Students at this point,

however, should be able to stand some real pressure to put everything they've got into the work and not settle for less than their best. Their previous experiences should have given them the kind of stamina it takes to get through the hard times and disappointments they'll confront as they put an issue together almost by themselves. Cary Bogue's experiences with the ginseng article, for example, should stand him in good stead when he undertakes something larger.

At this point, you should be able to ask each student to perform at a high level of competence. In fact, at this point it becomes unfair to him not to demand that he perform. The last thing you want is a student that goes on for three years turning out the same kind of article issue after issue and never growing at all. By now they should be convinced enough of the worth of the project, and of the importance of their work to be able to push themselves to the limit.

5. This is also the time to begin to point out to the students genuine examples of exploitation around them with the expectation that they will become genuinely concerned and make an attempt to do something if that is appropriate, or possible. They might be taken and shown a genuinely bad land development, for example; or they might watch the destruction of creek or pasture with which they are all familiar. They might be made aware of the exploitation of a contact they care about (Aunt Arie, for example, was talked out of her 150-year old, handmade spinning wheel by an outsider who came through and got her to sell it to him for five dollars).

This is obviously difficult for a teacher to orchestrate, but I find that just by keeping my eyes open, I come across plenty of things I'd like my kids to be aware of and perhaps react against. If I can get them together, and watch them come to some agreement on a position they'd like to take or a course of action

Harvey Miller (center) with Park and Conway Hughes.

they'd like to follow, and watch them suddenly become familiar with the idea that responsibility is a shared thing, and that you're often stronger in a group than alone, then I feel I'm getting somewhere.

Not long ago, we interviewed a man in North Carolina named Harvey Miller. He wrote a column for area newspapers called "News from Pigeon Roost." Essentially unschooled, he was absolutely ignorant of things like copyrights and contracts, and so he had let a local paper take copies of most of his columns with the understanding that excerpts from them would be brought together into book form. The paper intended to market the book in gift shops throughout the area, but they had not worked out anything specific with Harvey in terms of rights, royalties,

etc. As far as Harvey knew, they were going to pay him nothing. And on top of that, they had held the material for over two years, thus effectively stopping any other, more honest group that might have been interested in a real book contract.

The kids that I had with me at the time got pretty upset, and so they and I went, with Harvey, to the newspaper's office, and after long discussion, were able to reclaim all of Harvey's material and get the publisher to sign a statement saying he had returned it all to Harvey with the understanding that Harvey owned the rights, and neither they nor any other group could bring out a book without his permission. We loaded the material into a box and took it back to Harvey's house. He was delighted, for up until the last minute, he had been convinced that the publisher would pull some kind of trick and wind up not giving up the columns. We promised Harvey that if we had to, we had a lawyer in New York that we would involve, but luckily it didn't come to that, and the whole matter was settled quite peacefully.

But the problem was that Harvey had little money, and he still didn't have a book that might give him some additional income. So the kids got together, talked a while, came to a decision, and made him an offer: If he'd let them edit the columns and turn them into an entire issue of *Foxfire*, they in return would have a second cover designed that would be appropriate as the cover for his book. The printer would print enough copies to send to all our subscribers, plus 1,500 extra copies with the second cover which would be sent to Harvey free to market as he wished through gift shops in the area, through his column, or through friends. He'd get 100 percent of the sale price, unless he decided to give shops a discount in which case he'd get the whole price minus the shop's cut. If the first 1,500 sold out (we'd help by advertising them through *Foxfire* and through sales contacts we had), he himself could order, and pay for the printing of as many additional copies as he wanted. The printer would simply hold the plates and rerun them whenever Harvey wrote. The copyright and rights to the material, of course, would be transferred to Harvey and his complete control.

He felt that this was a fine deal, as did we, and agreed to it. The 148-page book appeared just before Christmas, 1974, as promised. And the 1,500 copies with the separate cover were delivered to Harvey personally, as promised, on the date we had agreed upon. By the time we arrived at his home, neighbors had already gathered around his front porch waiting for the delivery. Nearly a hundred orders had already come in by mail, and that night at the local motel, people knocked on our door until almost midnight wanting copies. By mid-January, over half the books were gone, and Harvey had pocketed over $2,000.00 cash. I'd be willing to bet that the students who worked on that project learned something that no text book could come close to duplicating.

There are other examples of exploitation that it is difficult for us to do much about; but I feel the educational experience the kids have when they run into them is worthwhile, even if they can't correct the situation.

One example of the latter kind of inhumanity comes to mind immediately: one of our favorite North Carolina contacts told us the story of a photographer who came down from New York to get some pictures of the hillbillies, and one of the photos he took was of the contact's mother. The photographer entered it in a contest sponsored by *Southern Living* and it won a substantial prize. Our contact found out about it much later when someone came through with a copy of the photograph as it appeared in the contest's magazine. The photographer hadn't let them know he had entered it in any contest, hadn't taken the time to ask permission, and hadn't even been human enough to share the winnings with them. There's no law that says he has to do so, but it would seem that simple human decency would demand a different course of action.

Closer to home, and something we did do something about, occurred this spring when two Florida tourists applied to a local bank for a loan to open a restaurant that would be called the *Foxfire* restaurant, and would use copies of our magazine's covers for placemats and menu holders. The men never even had the decency to come by the office and ask our permission —but simply forged ahead without it. We found out their in-

tentions from the president of the bank. The kids were furious, and told the banker that if he granted the loan and the men went ahead with their plan, they would call our lawyer in New York and tell him to sue. The kids' realization that they didn't have to stand for that sort of thing, and had the power to do something collectively about it, is one of those moments I wouldn't have had them miss for anything.

Although it's impossible to set this sort of thing up—nor would you want to—I think it is also good if students begin to *really* observe incidents where peers or classmates are hurt, ridiculed, or made fun of by another classmate or even by a teacher, instead of just passing by and paying it no attention—or even laughing along. What they do in reaction to such incidents is up to each individually, but they should be sensitive enough at this point that they wince when they see that kind of thing instead of participating. At the very least, perhaps after they've seen their fill of it, they'll make up their minds that they'll never do that sort of thing themselves; and they may even wind up (as I talked about Ray doing) including the student who's the brunt of some of those attacks into their own activities, and help to turn the heat away.

6. Last, and most difficult, is getting the student to the point where he can recognize injustice, and understand that authority is not something that is given by God to certain saints, but is based on the *acceptance* of it by others. Hitler had authority and power because people allowed him to. Immoral sheriffs exist in small towns because even though everyone knows they're selling moonshine and raising marijuana on the side, they shrug their shoulders and accept that—even smirk about it. There's a fine line here. You don't want to encourage paranoiac witch-hunting and constant fault-finding; and yet discouraging students from the close examination of issues and possible injustice can lead into the morass of a Watergate—an easy acceptance of immorality or abuse of power.

High school is not too early a place to begin the testing that will help a student define the boundaries of tolerance of human behavior. I'm not saying that our project seeks to radicalize our kids and send them out sniffing into and protesting loudly—and perhaps irresponsibly—about conditions that may exist in the school or community. But I *do* like to feel that our project here has the sort of atmosphere surrounding it that will allow a student to express his opinions or voice his gripes without being smacked; or raise questions and not be blizzarded to death with rationalizations and smokescreens that he *knows* ring false; or bring up points of concern to him and not be ignored or have them passed off as irrelevant.

Sometimes a student comes to me griping about a situation that he thinks is intolerable, and I am able to help him see the reason for that situation and why it may have to exist—at least for now. Some authority is necessary. Some restrictions on behavior *are* called for. Perhaps I can help him see and accept that. Although he may not like the idea that his parents want him in at 11 at night, I may be able to help him see why they ask him to be. Though he may not like the idea of having to suffer through a particular course or accept a certain punishment, sometimes I can help him see why it may be necessary—even desirable—that he do so.

And then there are times when a kid comes to me feeling that he or a peer has been unjustly treated, and I have to agree.

At this point, we as teachers, are really on the line, for how we respond to the situation may help shape the kid's future responses; may put us in such disfavor with our peers or bosses that we are from that point on restricted as to what we can do with the kids; may put us in a position where we can positively affect some changes; may . . . The whole thing is a can of worms. How do we get hold of it? I've been wrestling with that for nearly ten years now, for I teach in a school where there are some problems, and where some of the kids' gripes are absolutely justified. And I've learned a few things.

I've learned, for example, that there are times when your actions—or actions that you encourage—can do nothing but make the situation worse. In *The Water is Wide*, Pat Conroy

relates the story of his one-year stint as a teacher on a tiny, all-black island off the coast of South Carolina. He became so insensed by the conditions at the school that he repeatedly defied his superiors to the point where they were forced to fire him. His notion was that the attendant publicity would draw enough attention to the situation that it would have to be changed. Now perhaps that did happen. A more realistic possibility, however, is that the kids would again wind up being caught in the middle between a teacher they loved and trusted and an administration determined that no more "trouble-makers" would make it to the island.

I could get myself fired tomorrow, but I'm not sure what that would accomplish or how it would help change anything. Sim-

Dealing with Authority: Bob Vicker, county ordinary.

ilarly, a kid might dislike a situation in school so much that he would be tempted to purposely get himself kicked out just to be free of it, but has he got something better to go to? Is it going to accomplish anything? It certainly won't hurt, or change, or punish the object of his anger. What if the teacher helps the kid turn the situation around and realize in a positive sense, that there are times when it is better to suppress one's own desires in favor of a bigger goal or a more important cause? That, "If I do "X", then it will destroy my chances to do "Y" later and the risk isn't worth it." Does that make some sense? Sometimes.

The bitterest pill for a student to try to swallow is that through his angry reactions he may win a temporary victory, or gain some fleeting sense of success; but two days later he may watch the object of his anger turn on him (often in subtle ways) and make his life miserable. Or to watch the world fall apart when he finds himself on the streets because his parents believed the school instead of him and told him to go find a job and start paying his own way in the world.

I've also learned that there are times when a student has a legitimate beef and something positive *can* be done about it before he blows up in frustrated, irrational anger. Sometimes we go together to talk a situation out with the cause; sometimes I go myself and explain the student's point of view and get a concession or a change of procedure or policy.

But I also carry around with me the memory of what I thought was an effective approach to all this at my old high school. There, an enlightened journalism advisor would allow us, in the newspaper's editorial columns, to criticize just about any aspect of the school we wanted if we had our facts straight and did it responsibly and positively and with some understanding of the other person's point of view. The way he made sure we did that was through the use of one iron-clad rule: when the column was finished, we had to take it to the person or the head of the department we were criticizing and have that person read and initial it to signify that he had checked it over and that, even though he might not agree with that position, he at least admitted that the facts were accurate and fairly present-

ed. Then, if he wished, he could also write a rebuttal for the same issue that would be printed beside the editorial.

Sometimes the mere fact of the editorial's existence, and the knowledge that it would be printed if it was factually accurate, was enough to get the person to make a requested change in policy, and the editorial would never be run. There would be no need for it to be as its desired purpose had been accomplished. If we weren't that lucky, the policy at least had the effect of making the student study the situation from both sides, evaluate and present his argument fairly and accurately, and give him the feeling that he had taken some steps to correct the problem for the good of himself, his classmates, and the school at large.

Whatever the specific end result (a determination, for example, not to repeat the same mistakes with his own children or other young people he might someday find himself working with; or the positive, healthy correction of some legitimate grievance), the general result is still all important: the student begins to evaluate his gripes and his concerns with some compassion and some understanding, he gets some of the rough edges and some of the shrillness of his personality knocked off without damaging the underlying commitment, and he begins to get some notion of (and formulate some policies toward) what his own attitudes and stances and relationships with others around him are going to be like as he grows and develops.

Level IV

Independence

At this level, the student should be nearly out of our hands—beyond us—for this is the exit phase, the point at which he looks toward the future instead of backward to us for handholding and advice. At this point he saws through the cord.

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One frustrating part of this phase is that if he's truly reached it, then half the things he does that prove he's there are things we never see him do and never hear about. They may be as insignificant as unconsciously bending over to pick up a gum wrapper on his way across the lawn to lunch, or as important as devoting his free time to some humane endeavor of which we know nothing. The key is that he's doing it not for a grade or for the praise, but because the doing of it has become a part of his personality and his direction and his sensitivity to the world around him.

I remember a two-day trip to Washington, D.C. with Don MacNeil and Kaye Carver along. Neither of them had been to Washington before, and after the speeches they gave, I entrusted them to several teachers from Western High School who wanted them to come over and talk to their kids. We met back at the hotel that night, and they told me about the kids in that high school, and how a group of the students wanted to get a project like ours going there, and how they hoped they had been able to help out.

The next day, our last day in town, I had some business to attend to, so I set them free to sightsee as they might not have the chance to get back for years. When we met again that day, I found that rather than taking in the town, they had, on their own, caught a cab back to the high school and had spent the whole day there working with those same kids. There's a magazine called *Cityscape* going there now.

Or the night that Aunt Arie, during an interview with some of my girls, got sick, and the girls helped her to bed, cooked her some soup, and then spent the night with her to make sure she was all right. I found out the next day.

But along with these events that you don't initiate, and rarely find out about, there can also be a number of activities going on that you *do* see—self-initiated activities that are observable expressions of the kids' new maturity. And it doesn't matter at all that the expressions may be widely dissimilar (one kid, for example, whose sense of direction and commitment may be artistic, balanced against another who is focused on community issues, and another who is headed for machine work). What

matters is that you have on your hands a strong, warm, whole human being who has done a rare and beautiful thing: he has demonstrated choice. Self-determination. Responsible, positive direction. A kid who is beginning to influence his own fate *as he sees it.*

Sandy Jeranko, until recently the advisor to *Sea Chest*, a magazine off the coast of North Carolina, tells of two students of hers. One chose to stay on the island to claim his birthright and help chart and influence its future, and the other chose to leave after studying the community carefully and weighing what it had to offer his future. The point she makes is a good one: it doesn't matter that the decisions were opposites, or that she "failed" to get one student to stay and fight that area's problems. What matters is that both the students exercised informed, intelligent, carefully weighed choice, and that both went into the world as sounder, fuller, more positive human beings because of the experiences they had with her and her project.

And teachers must serve this new freedom and this new expression; not squash it backward into the old vehicles and the old forms. We must get more excited when our students grow away from us and our projects and our vehicle into the world than we do when they accomplish nearly anything else, for this is our triumph. The students that cling to us and our project and never want to leave are our failures—not our successes.

During this last part of their time in our school, the projects that they do while serving the remainder of their sentence become secondary—important only insofar as they continue and build on the development already begun, or insofar as they effect some change. There are many examples of activities that could be appropriate, all of which should be kid-initiated:

—putting pressure on an appropriate organization to do something relatively simple like getting a stop light installed at a particularly dangerous crossing; getting a county roadbank seeded; reclaiming a piece of eroding landscape for a community park; or getting together with a group to build a neighborhood playground.

—going into the community or school with a team and coming up with five concrete, positive, well-researched and checked-out suggestions that would benefit that community or school in some solid way.

—conducting a major research project (there are implications here for work he might be asked to do in college) independently or with a team. During his last year here, Ray McBride, conducted an independent project to survey all the water in Rabun County, find out how it was being used and/or abused, what was being done by the city and by industries and the government to keep it clean, and what was being done (or could be done) to reclaim any that was polluted. The paper forms the core of what will be a major article in the magazine, and it also was accepted by the biology teacher as filling the term paper requirement for that course.

Or the Marbarla group (short for Mary, Barbara, and Laurie who made up the team) which spent a year researching the

Betty's Creek Valley/Community and what had happened to it over the last 75 years, and how every resident on the creek felt about the changes that had taken place, and what each of them wished could happen in the future *(see Section II, 4)*. That piece of work became one whole issue of our magazine—and one of our best.

But as I said, the projects themselves, at this point, really are secondary. What's more important is that you now have on your hand a kid that's about to make some real tracks into a humane future and is anxious to get on with it.

Conclusion

And so the kids you have sweated over and labored with move on through graduation and into the world, leaving you behind to wonder where they've gone, how they're doing, what they're thinking—knowing all the time, of course, that just as surely as they've left us, we've left them, too as we turn our attention to a room full of brand-new faces, and hands that have never held a camera or a tape recorder.

And we start again.

I am continually asked what my old kids are doing; how I affected them. How do I answer something like that? Most are gone. Some come back once in a while and ask, "Do you remember when we did that together? I never forgot that, and I never will. That experience made a difference, and I carry it with me."

And that's about all. Enough? It's got to be. We remain here, members of a hit-and-miss profession. I'm never satisifed with what I've done, but I'm convinced that if I didn't make some difference in their lives, I at least did not waste their time. We did something—something fine—and it felt right.

We pointed straight into the wind—driving together.

Afterward

A Note About Organization

As we approach 1976, I see stretched across this country hundreds of projects similar to *Foxfire*. Nearly every one is organized within its school in a slightly different fashion. Nearly all the schools give the participating students scholastic credit; nearly all encourage interviewing and photography in the surrounding community; nearly all turn out some sort of an end product: a magazine, articles for the community newspaper, radio or video shows. But there the similarities end. Some schools allow the projects to handle their finances and their books and bank accounts individually; some don't. Some allow teachers to take the kids on interviews during school hours; some don't. Some give the sponsoring teachers release time, or classes devoted just to the project; some don't. Some schools provide a darkroom, equipment and supplies—even offset presses; some don't. Some insist that the project be relegated to a journalism class or even (and this seems to be the least successful method in terms of maintaining student interest and project longevity) to the status of an extracurricular club; some allow it to exist in English or history classes. What variety!

And constantly we are asked, "How do you do it?"

Our project started in 1966. At that time, I was a full-time teacher of ninth and tenth-grade English teaching five classes a day.

The first issue of *Foxfire* was published in March of 1967 as a product of those English classes. Decisions concerning the magazine were made during class time. Articles, poems and short stories were polished during class time. But all interviews were taped and all photographs made after school hours. Kids either went with me in the afternoons or evenings, or they went on their own.

I was allowed by our administration to open our classroom at night (and usually did) so that students could come in and transcribe tapes, organize articles, do layouts, mail magazines out, answer correspondence or design covers. That meant that after I finished with the magazine for the day, I still often had ahead of me other duties related to the English classes such as grading the weekly compositions that I still insisted on, preparing lessons in stories or novels we might be reading, etc.

The school allowed us to solicit donations in the community, it allowed us to keep and handle our own finances, and it allowed me to give the students credit in English for work they did on *Foxfire*. A neighbor let us print our photos in his basement darkroom, but most of the rest of the production was relegated to a card table in the back of my classroom.

And that's the way it went for four years.

In 1969, with the help of a college friend and a sympathetic lawyer (and the permission of the school) we set ourselves up as a non profit tax-exempt corporation under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We were consistently broke financially, for even though newpaper and magazine articles about us brought in a steady flow of subscription money, we had not had sufficient foresight to charge *enough* for the magazine to cover the cost of equipment, tapes, film and gas, all of which had to come out of my pocket and out of new subscription money. Consequently, we always exhausted our bank account in paying for the new issue, and then had to sell more subscriptions to print the issues needed to satisfy the obligations to our old and new subscribers. It was a constant rat-race. We needed advice, and we needed money. As a foundation, we could perhaps attract both in the form of tax-exempt

contributions and a Board of Directors and an Advisory Board. And it worked.

With the advice available, we were able to set appropriate subscription prices, and begin to approach foundations one of which, The National Endowment for the Humanities, blessed us with $10,000 to be spent over a one-year period. It was more money than we had ever dreamed of attracting, and it catapulted us (both realistically and psychologically) into a whole new realm. I vaguely remember going out that night and getting drunk . . . .

With that money, we purchased new equipment—including a videotape machine—, paid our gasoline bills, installed our own darkroom and office in one corner of a new building our school had just constructed, and hired Suzy Angier, a *Vista* volunteer from Connecticut, to give me a hand with an operation that, in combination with my teaching duties, was on the verge of exhausting me mentally and physically. Suzy, thank goodness, is still with us today.

[There is another advantage to incorporating—or at the very least having an iron-clad organizational agreement with the school or a separate community corporation—that I have not mentioned yet, and that involves not only the longevity of the organization (if I leave, someone is set up automatically to come in behind me and keep the project going) but also the safety of the tapes and photographs involved to prevent any possible exploitation of the contacts and the kids.

I feel that it is imperative that no individual be allowed to own the tapes and photographs. They belong not to the advisor of the project, but to the community from which they were obtained. The community should be the ultimate judge of how they are used, otherwise, a person like myself could have left our school after five or six years, produced the *Foxfire Book*, and pocketed the considerable royalties. Or contacts might find their material being used in magazines or books or movie scripts without their knowledge or approval. Not long ago, for example, *Newsweek* requested our permission to reprint some of the photos we had taken at a snake handling service in a mountain church in their own magazine. Had I

been the owner of the material, I might have gone ahead and given permission myself. Because our organization has strict rules about this sort of thing, however, I had to call the preacher of the church and ask his permission first. He was absolutely adamant about not wanting the photos to appear in *Newsweek*, and so permission was not given. Had I acted alone in that instance, and had I given my permission without consulting that preacher, we would have lost a fine contact forever.

At a recent workshop in Parkersburg, West Virginia, since the organization had not incorporated yet and might not do so in the future, we set up the following arrangement:

At the end of each school year, all tapes and photographs get deposited in special filing cabinets in the school library under the custody of the school's librarian who has a set of guidelines to go by as to how the materials may be used. During the summer, copies of the tapes and photos are made and deposited with the local historical society, again, under strict restrictions as to their usage (contacts or their families, for example, must give specific permission in writing for any publication or usage outside the school's magazine for which the materials were originally collected). Should the magazine ever go out of business, or the faculty advisor leave and not be replaced, the original tapes and photographs all revert to the historical society for protection. The advisor would not be able to take them with him. These restrictions are all explained to the contact immediately following the interview, and are a part of the form he signs at the time of the interview giving his permission to the school's project to publish the information he has given them for their magazine.]

Our next big break came totally by accident. In Washington, D.C. on a mission to round up some additional sympathetic souls to serve on the Advisory Board of our new corporation, I stopped in to see Sam Stanley of the Smithsonian's Center for the Study of Man. That same afternoon, quite by chance, Brian Beun and Ann Vick of *Ideas* (the organization publishing both this document and the accompanying Skills section) stopped in Sam's office also. One purpose of their Washington-based foundation being to find innovative projects and help spread

their idea to other communities, they saw *Foxfire* as an idea ready to spread, got in touch with me, and together we hammered out a relationship: beginning with the next school year, I would stop teaching full-time and instead teach one formal class a day devoted to *Foxfire* and journalism. *Ideas* would make up the balance of my teaching salary thus freeing me to work full time on *Foxfire* and try as many different angles as I could to make it more effective and more successful as a teaching tool. Meanwhile, they would begin to sponsor duplications in other communities that were excited about the project, believing that the idea could take root and be immensely valuable in many different communities and schools. I would give a portion of my time to the training of new groups of advisors and kids that either came here through the help of *Ideas*, or to which I would be sent.

Freed from the pressures of full-time teaching, and bolstered by the conviction of all of us that *Foxfire* projects could make important contributions to high school education in many locations, the project took on yet another dimension. What else could be done with the magazine and the kids? What else could be done *besides* the magazine—but with the kids? Where would the risk money come from to sponsor some of the innovations we tried here?

The answer to the last question came, though we didn't know it at the time, in the form of a request from an old college friend of mine, Mike Kinney, at Doubleday in New York. He urged us to put some of the magazine articles together into book form to be published by his company. We agreed, *The Foxfire Book* appeared (recently passing a million in sales) followed by *Foxfire 2* and *Foxfire 3*. Suddenly the money was there.

We began to stretch, to experiment, to reach out.

Three big breaks, but none of them would have been worth a damn had Suzy and I not constantly tried to keep our school with us and insure our welcome. Always playing by their rules, we slowly began to request additional stretching room:

—If a student had a regular study hall period and he wanted to work with *Foxfire*, would it be possible for us to have him

transferred out of that study hall to our office for the year to work with us independent of the journalism class? Yes.

—If we did that, and the student wanted a credit in journalism, and we felt he deserved it, could we give it to him? Yes.

—If we set up an interview for a student that would last through several periods during the school day, and we sent that student around two days in advance of the interview with a permission slip to be signed by the teachers involved, and each felt the student was doing well enough in that class to be excused from their period on the designated day and would sign the slip, then would it be permissible to take the kid on the interview? Yes.

—Could the kid go alone if he had his own car and his parents' permission? Yes.

—If I were invited to give a talk to a teachers' conference in Colorado, and the conference staff would foot the bill for two kids to come along to participate in the program, and the teachers and parents involved gave their permission, would the school? Yes.

And so it went, one slow step at a time, until we evolved into our present structure.

As the number of kids involved grew, so too did our full-time adult staff. Suzy was still there, of course, and welcome in the eyes of the school as long as she observed those restrictions that applied to the other faculty members—and as long as we could still pay her salary. Margie Bennett, a graduate of our school with a college degree in medical technology was our next addition. Serving as my secretary, she also works as a staff member with the kids, types articles for those who can't type, and generally keeps everything functioning in some sort of orderly pattern.

Shortly after Margie came Pat Rogers. Pat had graduated from our school the year I arrived, and he had a short story in the first issue of our magazine. He had gone on to acquire a degree in journalism from the University of Georgia, a wife and a small son, and a couple of years of military service. He returned home to a grand welcome from the school (and from his

parents who still run the bus station in town) to join our staff; and he is now the Vice President of our Corporation and would take over should something happen to me.

Suddenly my ability to make things happen for kids had been multiplied by three—all paid for by royalties from our books.

At the present time, there is still one formal journalism class a day. During the remaining periods, students are in our office working on individual projects and responsibilities (the latter including such things as handling correspondence, recording subscriptions, making bank deposits, etc.). We keep the office open until 5 in the afternoon, and usually open it again at night if there are students who want to work. We all take kids out of classes regularly for interviews and trips if they're passing in the classes involved. And many of them do interviews on their own after school with our equipment which they can check out and take home with them at any time as long as they return it the following day.

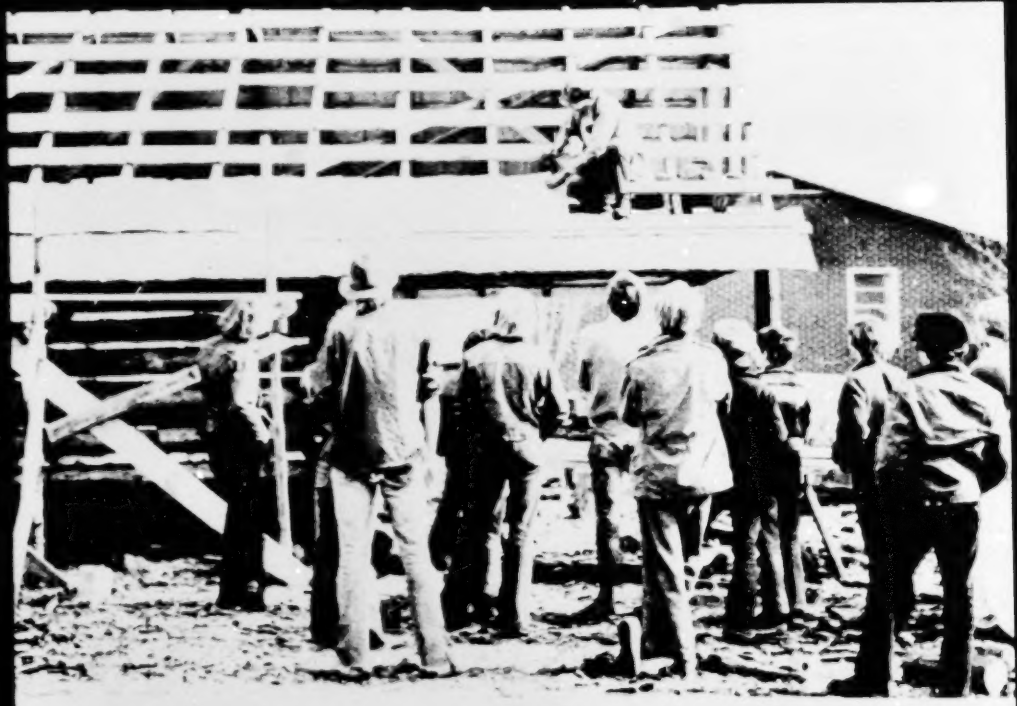
The student newspaper, which we reactivated, is one of Pat's responsibilities.

The class itself, one of my responsibilities, is divided up into three groups: A, B and C. On Mondays and Fridays, all students must be in the class. It is during this time that all of us together make decisions regarding everything from the choice of a cover photo for the next issue to the expenditure of a sum of money to the initiation of a new phase of our program or a decision as to whether or not to let a filmmaker or reporter come here to gather information for a story. The magazine pays for itself completely (in 1974 we took in over $36,000 worth of subscriptions and paid out $25,000 for printing, postage, our mailing service, tapes, film, photographic paper and chemicals, gasoline, etc.) thus freeing up all the book royalties for investment in new experiments. Classes are also used, of course, for instruction in journalism, for work in hard skills such as grammar or descriptive writing (though much of that sort of work is done with the students on an individual basis as they put their articles together), and for discussions led by special visitors or guests.

Contacts On Campus

Above left, C.M. Arrowood, showing the kids how to dowse for water. Above right, Buck Carver talking to the kids about moonshining. Below, Aunt Arie in the journalism class.

Above, learning how to make apple cider. Below, learning how to get the hair off a hog that has just been slaughtered.



Woodrow Shope showing Foxfire kids how to put on a roof of hand-split boards . . .

. . . and how to split boards.

Contacts Off Campus

Learning how to make a basket at Aunt Arie's.

The remaining three days? Pat, Margie, Suzy and myself hold a staff meeting every Monday morning. One of the decisions we make then is the location to which we will take the class that week. If we decide to see the grist mill on Betty's Creek, for example, then we make up a list of things we want to point out to the kids while there. Then on Tuesday during the journalism class period, Margie takes group A to the location and either leads the group through herself, or has a contact in the community take the group through. On Wednesday, group B goes to the same place with Suzy, and on Thursday group C goes there with Pat. The next Monday, we choose a new location. The two groups who are not on the field trip on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, work on their own projects in the office with staff members on duty there to help them if help is needed.

During the last semester of each year, seniors (all of whom have already turned out regular articles for *Foxfire* and our newspaper) are encouraged to adopt, individually, independent research projects that will involve, for the semester, a look at some aspect of our community or our culture as it exists today in contrast to the way it existed fifty or sixty years ago. In the spring of 1975, for example, the following topics were undertaken by seniors, each involving outside reading, interviews in the community, independent analysis; and hopefully, some linkage with a field they might want to go into in college:

—The role of the community minister at the turn of the century (as community psychiatrist, counselor, etc.) as opposed to today (as businessman, etc.)

—The difference in types, numbers and motivations for crime then and now.

—Mountain cabin architecture, its roots in Scotland and Ireland, and its evolution to today's style.

—The changing role of the mountain woman.

—Pressures that caused mountain families to move to cities, and why those families that returned to the mountains did so.

—The changing role of parents in the mountains.

—Differences in business practices and business accounting styles then and now.

—Land prices then and now; the roots of the current explosion and the effect that it is having on mountain families.

As each study is finished, it becomes an article for the center section of *Foxfire*. During the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday class periods each week, I meet with these seniors individually to check their progress and findings, make suggestions, and help focus their work. Other staff members are available to help them facilitate interviews, arrange class excuses, and so on.

Monday staff meetings are also the times when we, as a staff, sit back, put our feet up on desks, lock out the outside world, and discuss the kids individually and their progress, make decisions about the program that we as a staff must make, eval-

uate our own performance as a staff, and discuss our willingness/ability to undertake or help guide new projects or directions the kids have suggested and may later want to put into effect.

Recent staff meetings, for example, have decided the following:

—Our willingness to go along with the kids' request that we add another staff member to take over the new videotape aspect of our program and help the kids learn how to film, edit and broadcast a daily show over our community cable television network. Mike Cook, a former *Foxfire* editor, will be hired full-time upon his graduation from the University of Georgia journalism school this Christmas. Rough shows already being put together by the kids and broadcast on a once a week basis include folklore interviews, musical concerts, public meetings, and sports events all taking place in our immediate area.

—The number of kids to be hired this summer out of the twenty-two applicants, and the priority of projects we will be involved in during that three-month period.

—The hiring of five community men to work with the kids to complete the moving and reconstruction of some twenty-five log buildings on the *Foxfire* land—a job that will take several years and involve scores of kids. *(See the Introduction to Foxfire 3 reprinted in the Appendix.)*

—Approval of the kids' plans for the Harvey Miller book—both its format, number of copies to be printed, and means of distribution.

—The sending of invitations to four groups to come to the campus and give concerts for the entire student body (which our kids will videotape and broadcast subsequently).

—A decision on the date for this year's Board meeting which the kids will direct and host.

That's only part of it, of course, but it will perhaps give you some idea of how we work in a project whose main purpose is to explore new ways to involve kids: if a student cannot write, will that same student work with Millard, the foreman on our

land, to build a chimney for one of the log houses, take a series of photographs as it goes up, and then perhaps put together a story for the magazine about that experience? Perhaps. If not, where else can we plug that kid in? How else can we bring him along? We'll find a way, somehow . . . .

In time, as our kids change and our staff grows larger and matures, our structure will change also. But if you walk into our offices right now, before Mike gets here and before 1975 is through, you'll find Pat, Suzy, Margie, Millard and I doing what's described above.

And you'll find kids running everywhere.

Introduction to

The Foxfire Book

The contents of this book need little introduction; they stand on their own as helpful instructions and enjoyable reading. But what is not immediately apparent is that the material here was collected and put together almost entirely by high school students. And that makes the book a little special—for me at least, since they were kids I was supposed to be teaching.

It was 1966, and I had just finished five years at Cornell. I had an A.B. in English and an M.A. in Teaching, and I thought I was a big deal—a force to be reckoned with. So I went to Georgia and took a job at the 240-pupil Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School where I taught ninth and tenth grade English, geography, and had about ten other side responsibilities. Rabun Gap is right in the Appalachians. God's country, as they say here, and I'll go along with that.

About six weeks later, I surveyed the wreckage. My lecturn (that's a protective device a teacher cowers behind while giving a lecture nobody's listening to) was scorched from the time Tommy Green tried to set it on fire with his lighter—during class. Charles Henslee had already broken off the blade of his Barlow knife in the floorboards. Every desk was decorated with graffiti. My box of yellow chalk was gone, and so were the thumbtacks that had held up the chart of the Globe Theatre.

The nine water pistols I had confiscated that very afternoon had been reconfiscated from under my nose.

And it was with a deep sigh that, as I launched one of several paper airplanes within easy reach, I began to ponder greener pastures. Either that or start all over.

The answer was obvious. If I were to finish out the year honorably, it would be necessary to reassert my authority. No teenagers were going to push me around. Besides, my course was too important. First offense would be an "X" in the grade book. Second, a paddling. Third, to the principal. Fourth, out of class for two weeks.

It frightens me to think how close I came to making another stupid mistake. First, I had bored them unmercifully. Now I was about to impose a welcome punishment. Two weeks out of that class would have been more pleasure than pain.

Those who cannot remember the past not only relive it; they tend to impose it, mistakes and all, on others. My own high school—monumentally boring texts and lectures, all forgotten; punishments and regulations and slights that only filled a reservoir of bitterness; and three blessed teachers who let me make things, helped me make them, and praised the results.

Luckily, it took only a few rewards to keep me going. How many students were denied even those few scraps of self-esteem from anyone other than their peers? And how many was I now denying?

I am not sure what the magic formula is or whether I have it pegged yet, but it involves a chemistry that allows us to believe we may have worth after all. Someone says, "You've done well," and we hunger to make that happen again and again. Too often we, as teachers, slip, and that first flush of success our students get comes after they've survived a night of drinking Colt 45, stuck up the local gas station, or taken two tabs of acid and made it out the other side alive.

We could catch some of those if we would.

The next day I walked into class and said, "How would you like to throw away the text and start a magazine?" And that's how *Foxfire* began.

From the beginning, the idea was to involve everyone. (It hasn't always worked, but we try.) We decided to print one issue put together by all of us as a class and during class time. If that issue did what I hoped it would do for my ailing classes, we might try to make it a regular thing. But for the time being, one issue only.

The contents? There were lots of possibilities. Many older people in this area, for example, still plant today by the signs of the zodiac and the stages of the moon. I had heard them mention it, but I didn't know what it meant. Rather than interrupt a conversation to find out, I figured I'd get my students to tell me. They'd probably know since it was mostly their parents and grandparents who were doing it. But my kids didn't really know what it was either, and soon they were as curious as I was. Why not find out and turn the information into an article?

So they went home and talked—really talked—to their own relatives, some of them for the first time. From those conversations came superstitions, old home remedies, weather signs, a story about a hog hunt, a taped interview with the retired sheriff about the time the local bank was robbed—and directions for planting by the signs. It was looking good.

Another possibility was poetry. Many of my students hated the stuff. I suspect one of the reasons was that they were forced to read pages of sentimental greeting card verse before they ever got to high school. In any case, working with poetry from an editor's point of view might be one way to overcome an already deeply rooted bias, and they were willing to try. So we added poetry too. Some was from our school (and some was from notably bad students in an effort to give them a boost they were hungry for). Some of it was from students in other schools in the state. And some was even from practicing poets. As we said in the first issue, "We hoped that they would remember their own beginnings and their own battles to be recognized and not be too proud to provide us with examples to follow—pieces we could aspire to in our own work."

The name? Each student submitted three choices. Duplications were eliminated, a master list was mimeographed and

passed out, the obviously unworkable ones were dropped, and the kids voted from among those left. They chose "foxfire," a tiny organism that glows in the dark and is frequently seen in the shaded coves of these mountains.

And money? The school could provide no support at all. Any financial obligations would be my problem—not theirs. Looking back, I can see what a blessing in disguise that was. It meant the magazine had to sell, and that literally forced us to emphasize folklore rather than poetry, for magazines devoted to verse almost never survive for very long on the market. It also meant the kids had to find the money for that first issue themselves, and that made them more determined to see the magazine go than anything I could have said.

And so they hit the streets after school. Any donor, no matter how small his gift, would be listed in the issue, and he would receive a free copy signed by all the kids.

They collected four hundred fifty dollars. The local printer said that was enough to print six hundred copies photo-offset. So we printed six hundred copies, sold out in a week, and printed six hundred more.

It sounds simple doesn't it? I can promise there were times we almost chucked the whole thing and went back to *Silas Marner*. In our total ignorance we made some colossal blunders. We went broke a couple of times, for one. People like John Dyson and groups like the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines came along and pulled us out of the mud, brushed us off, and wound us up again.

And each time we flopped, we got up a little stronger. Now, in Rabun Gap, there exists a magazine that has subscribers in all fifty states and a dozen foreign countries. It has been written about in magazines like *Saturday Review, New Republic, National Geographic School Bulletin, Scholastic Scope,* and *Whole Earth Catalogue*. It has received two grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, one of them for $10,000. But most important, it is run by high school students—students who are going on to college knowing that they can be forces for constructive change; knowing that they can *act* re-

sponsibly and effectively rather than being always *acted upon*.

Looking beyond Rabun Gap and *Foxfire*, I can't get over the feeling that similar projects could be duplicated successfully in many other areas of the country, and to the genuine benefit of almost everyone involved.

Daily our grandparents are moving out of our lives, taking with them, irreparably, the kind of information contained in this book. They are taking it, not because they want to, but because they think we don't care. And it isn't happening just in Appalachia. I think, for example, of numerous Indian reservations, Black cultures near the southern coasts, Ozark mountain communities, and a hundred others.

The big problem, of course, is that since these grandparents were primarily an oral civilization, information being passed through the generations by word of mouth and demonstration, little of it is written down. When they're gone, the magnificent hunting tales, the ghost stories that kept a thousand children sleepless, the intricate tricks of self-sufficiency acquired through years of trial and error, the eloquent and haunting stories of suffering and sharing and building and healing and planting and harvesting—all these go with them, and what a loss.

If this information is to be saved at all, for whatever reason, it must be saved now; and the logical researchers are the grandchildren, not university researchers from the outside. In the process, these grandchildren (and we) gain an invaluable, unique knowledge about their own roots, heritage, and culture. Suddenly they discover their families—previously people to be ignored in the face of the seventies—as pre-television, pre-automobile, pre-flight individuals who endured and survived the incredible task of total self-sufficiency, and came out of it all with a perspective on ourselves as a country that we are not likely to see again. They have something to tell us about self-reliance, human interdependence, and the human spirit that we would do well to listen to.

Is the subject, English, ignored in the process? Hardly. In fact, the opposite is true. English, in its simplest definition, is

communication—reaching out and touching people with words, sounds, and visual images. We are in the business of improving students' prowess in these areas. In their work with photography (which must tell the story with as much impact and clarity as the words), text (which must be grammatically correct except in the use of pure dialect from tapes that they transcribe), lay-out, make-up, correspondence, art and cover design, and selection of manuscripts from outside poets and writers—to say nothing of related skills such as fund raising, typing, retailing, advertising, and speaking at conferences and public meetings—they learn more about English than from any other curriculum I could devise. Moreover, this curriculum has built-in motivations and immediate and tangible rewards.

The project also has benefits for the community at large. The collection of artifacts, tapes, and photographs is a valuable addition to any community museum. Furthermore, many still culturally distinctive areas, cut off from the main thrust of our country, are also economically and educationally deprived. Articles about local craftsmen and craft cooperatives, to give only one small example, can result in a welcome flow of income from a population grown weary of a plastic world. And the education the students can acquire in the process can be a welcome supplement to their ordinary routine.

And the whole thing doesn't cost that much. In pure business terms, you can get a staggering return from a relatively small investment.

The kid who scorched my lecturn had been trying to tell me something. He and his classmates, through their boredom and restlessness, were sending out distress signals—signals that I came perilously close to ignoring.

It's the same old story. The answer to student boredom and restlessness (manifested in everything from paper airplanes to dope) maybe—just maybe—is not stricter penalties, innumerable suspensions, and bathroom monitors. How many schools (mine included) have dealt with those students that still have fire and spirit, *not* by channeling that fire in constructive, creative directions, but by pouring water on the very flames that could make them great? And it's not *necessarily* that the rules

are wrong. It's the arrogant way we tend to enforce them. Until we can *inspire* rather than babysit, we're in big trouble. Don't believe me. Just watch and see what happens. We think drugs and turnover rates and dropouts are a problem now. We haven't seen anything yet.

Foxfire obviously isn't the whole answer. But maybe it's a tiny part of it. If this book is worth anything at all, it's because every piece of it was put together and handled and squeezed and shaped and touched by teenagers.

And it's been a long time since I found a paper airplane under my desk.

BEW

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Introduction to

Foxfire 2

One evening a couple of years ago, with some cicadas making a deceptively comfortable racket outdoors, and the mountains easing from green to blue to purple, I sat down alone at a desk full of papers and photographs and notebooks and articles torn out of magazines and loose paper clips and Bic pen tops and empty film cans and general trash like that; and I shoved it all around and got enough flat space to make an introduction to a book some high school kids and I had put together. That was the first *Foxfire Book*.

It was no piece of cake—that introduction. Mostly it was hard because I was trying to tell a lot of people who had never heard of us who we were and what we were doing. That's done now. This evening I sit down alone at the same desk, having just made another flat space and nodded to the mountains, prepared to do it all again; and I feel some sense of relief at not having to tell over again the story of *Foxfire*. Tonight I just feel like talking some on paper.

A lot has happened down here since that first introduction. But the cicadas outside are at it again tonight just like they were before. They haven't changed. The world goes on. There's something there to wonder at . . . .

Meanwhile, there's this second book that on the surface is about the same thing the first one was about—namely, one group of people and how they dealt. Simple. But I suspect that

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if you really got into the first volume, you know already it had to do with a lot more than that. Perhaps you're the kind who once knew a grandfather who was extraordinary, maybe for no other reason than that he didn't give a flying damn that he was poor as Job's turkey as long as everyone he cared about was dry and warm, and that there was hot food on the table, and a couple of good neighbors, and time to hike up into that cove above the cabin to see if there were any four-prongers this year in the 'sang patch. Or maybe for the fact that he was one of those rascally scoundrels who ran a liquor still in a basement right in the middle of town and vented his smoke out the same chimney the courthouse used. Like that.

Or maybe you know people like Suzy and Harry. Suzy works with us. I don't remember just how it happened except that she was a VISTA here, and when she was done with that, we got her. And she married Harry from Virginia who learned how to make pots from Bob Owens and drove a beat-up Chevy pickup on its fourth transmission and grew a beard. And Suzy used to come in to work every day with great plum-colored bruises on her legs where she had fallen down between the floor joists of the house they were building by themselves in a pine thicket near Tiger. And she was always laughing, and the kids would crowd around and want to help—and she and Harry let them.

Or you know and probably care deeply about some high school kids, and maybe this kind of thing has happened to you. Then you'd understand the day when I was in the office and Suzy was in the outside room and I heard her laughing—as usual—except she was really cracked up this time, and so naturally I had to go out and see what was happening, and she said just be quiet and listen. And Carlton, one of the tenth grade kids, had been in the darkroom alone for an hour and I had forgotten—and God he was missing his English class—and this string of muffled swear words suddenly drifted through the darkroom door. Yep. Carlton was still in there—oh, hell, that English class—trying to make a double exposure print for Karen's and Betse's burials article. And he was trying to figure out how to do it and burning up all this printing paper and coming closer and closer to getting it just right and talking to him-

self explaining what was wrong like there were seventy-eight people watching. And Suzy had been listening to the struggle, laughing, when—Bam—out he came with a dripping wet print and a *There how does that grab you*—and it was beautiful, and we used it on the cover of the magazine that had that article in it (and in the book). And Suzy and I were both laughing, and then Carlton cracked up too. And we slapped him on the back and he punched us and we laughed some more. And then he went to English.

And when he got to English, he had to write five hundred times, "I will not be late to class any more."

And the teacher read some poems aloud that nobody listened to, so she spent the whole hour reading to herself while the kids hacked off—or slept. Sort of like us in church five minutes into the sermon. You know.

All that's true. And I guess if you really understand what this book is about, you've had some of that happen to you because this book is *really* about those kids like Carlton and what they did in between algebra problems. See, this isn't really a "How to Survive in the Woods" manual, although it does show how one specific group of people in one specific time and place did survive. I just want to explain that to some of you who may be irritated because we haven't told you how to vent your outhouse yet. See, mostly this book is about school, and about community, and about people, and about the great adventure life can be when lived intensely. And about the fact that instead of celebrating with our kids the infinite variety and ingenuity of nature and man, we are still allowing them to be drowned in the Franco-Prussian wars.

Sometimes, on cicada nights like this, I do a lot of thinking. Mostly it's thinking about stuff that's happened since the first *Foxfire Book* came out—about letters we've gotten, schools we've seen, groups we've visited and talked with. We made some good friends through that book—friends who intuitively understood what we were saying, knew they were saying it too (though in different ways), and got in touch. And sometimes I am overwhelmed by optimism when I watch them at work with those fragile, humane experiments like the Opportunity II

school in San Francisco, The Young Film Makers and the *Fourth Street i* and the Teachers' and Writers' Collaborative in New York City, and Interlocken's Crossroads America Program. And I know good things are happening to the kids involved. I *know* it's making a difference.

But inevitably the optimism I feel when I dig in with those people and share their adventures—inevitably that is tempered by the sounds of human cicadas that endure and drone on and on endlessly into the night.

"I will not be late to class any more."

And they never understand.

Sometimes I lie awake at night and think about all that. Strange stuff to think about, I know; and I probably wouldn't except that it constantly colors my life and the lives of kids I care about.

What do I say, for example, in answer to the stacks of letters I get from teachers asking questions like, "My pupils are so listless, so uninterested. How can I motivate them?" Or, "I would like to start a project like yours. Would you please tell me exactly how to go about doing so from beginning to end?" How can I answer questions like that, knowing that the only way it can work is for the teacher to push back the desks and sit down on the floor with the kids and really listen to them for the first time, and see what they can all come up with *together* that *might* work in the context of their own particular school and community—and then try to find ways to make it work for as long as it seems worth doing—and then find another. Knowing all the while most teachers won't bother to do that. Knowing they want texts and learning kits and packets that tell them how. Knowing they're missing the greatest adventure of all. And so are their kids.

How do you get to those teachers?

And what do I say to kids who ask me for one good reason why they should stay in school and stay straight when they've just been humiliated in front of their classmates for answering a question wrong, or just been punished for doing something that deserved no punishment (or something they didn't do), or

just flunked a course by one point—a course they'll now have to repeat. Or a kid who's on the verge of running away?

What do I say to those faces?

And what do I say to a state's education organization that's trying to prevent the teaching of journalism by any teacher not propertly credentialed in that area, knowing that I never had a course in journalism or folklore in my life. What do I say to them, knowing our magazine has been written about in virtually every publication of any note in this country—but has yet to be mentioned, after seven years of operation, in our own state's education publications (and there are several). I should think that at least half the time of such organizations would be devoted to ferreting out projects of some potential worth, helping them when they need it most (as we did often during those first three years), and putting them in touch with others who can act as support, as valid critics, and as invaluable resources. We operate in vacuums.

What do I say to them?

I lie awake and think about that stuff. I can't help it. And I am filled with dread at the thought that that mentality will prevail, driving out the next Pat Conroys, Herb Kohls, Jim Herndons, and Jonathan Kozols in the process—along with the fragile, humane experiments. Because I know that if it's a lost struggle, everyone loses: the kids, the society that gets them next, and the teachers who scurry back to the safety of their texts and shelve their imaginations and their enthusiasms and their dreams for better times.

Then I remember Myles Horton—constantly engaged in causes bigger than himself—and what he says to people who lie awake at night: "You must not worry about things you have no control over. Make peace with yourself, choose your battle carefully, fight there and there alone to make things right, and leave the rest." And that makes a certain amount of sense. If our battle is to go roaring into a school, try to change it, and get fired in the process, then that's one thing. But I am rapidly reaching the point where I believe my battle is with a tiny group of kids who happen to be working on a magazine called *Foxfire*, and with what happens to them in the process of that

involvement. And that is all I can afford to worry about. They are my challenge now. Period.

Perhaps that's all any of us can do. Choose one small piece of turf, be honest with ourselves, choose our approaches, stay in touch, remain constantly open to new ideas and new approaches, shut up, go to work, and hope for the best.

That is what I find myself doing. For the record, then, and for those who are still reading and curious, and for those who have written and asked, these are the principles I operate by today. They will change in time, but for now these are my touchstones:

First, I've found that the world of most of my kids is filled with so much negative energy imposed from outside sources that they have no choice but to withdraw into themselves and their circle of friends for sanity, safety, and some sense of belonging. Examples come to mind immediately: the shopkeeper who automatically suspects the kids are going to steal; the waitress who automatically assumes the kids are going to make a mess and be a pain in the neck; the dormitory, home, or classroom where, whenever the kid hears an adult call his name, he recoils, wondering, "What am I going to have to do now?" or, "What have I done this time?" Or where a kid is met at the door with that special gaze designed and perfected through years of practice that says, "I'm here, see? Any trouble and you're going to wish there hadn't been, and I'm not kidding." The air is charged with it.

How many times have I seen the effects of a great day evaporate like mist before the door of a classroom or home? A fourteen-year-old gives a talk before a group of 450, is mobbed afterwards by people wanting to ask questions, thank him, or get his autograph on the article he wrote in the last *Foxfire;* and that night, giddy with happiness and accomplishment, he is met at home by a mother who chews him out for forgetting to make his bed that morning. He says, "But, Mom, let me tell you what just happened to me." And she says, "I know already. You got caught smoking, right?"

And then those adults wonder why there's no communication; wonder why the kids don't want to come home at night. What choice have we given them?

I've been building a six-sided log house on the side of a mountain near here. Kids help me all the time, of course—nearly every day—and some of the finest experiences of any of our lives have happened there. We have no blueprints (read curriculum guides), so when someone gets a brainstorm and suggests we move a window, or shove a wall two feet farther out, or stick in a skylight, we often do it. A couple of weeks ago six of us got the last wall log up, notched and secured, and mounted the first floor joist for the second floor. It was a moment we'd been working toward for many months; and when we finished, we charged down the mountainside to The Villager, a local restaurant, for a celebration. Kate, who owns the place, let me cook up some stuff for them, and we all laughed and ate and laughed—really did it up right. But I made sure I got them back to the dorm that night in plenty of time for study hall.

The next day I was treated to a display of real anger by the dormitory houseparents. Mostly it centered around the fact that the kids had come in noisy for study hall, and they just weren't going to have any more of that. Instead of sharing that experience with those kids, they had landed on them, saying that if it happened again, they'd make a rule that the kids would either have to be in a full half hour before study hall, or just not go outside before study hall at all. Here we go again.

The obvious corollary is that not only do we too rarely share a kid's ideas and joys and triumphs, and not only do we too rarely put them in situations where they *can* triumph, but we also do not trust them. They cannot be in such and such a place unsupervised. They cannot be left with this decision. They cannot be expected to carry out that task. And so we retreat behind rules that bind them up.

To say kids *cannot* be trusted is the most personally damning statement any adult can make, for it simply reveals either that he can neither create nor endure the kind of atmosphere in which a kid can try and perhaps fail (read learn) and yet not be damned; or that he is not an inspiring enough individual to make them want to participate *with* him as responsible partners in a common goal.

I'm not just spouting idealistic jargon. I've seen it work the other way. The Hill School, for example, where kids can work alone on independent study projects in most of the campus buildings far into the night; or another school I know of where the kids even have the responsibility of deciding at the end of the year which teachers get rehired; or our school where an inspired work supervisor has turned over the supervision of the campus work crews to the kids.

Too many of us fall short of that love and patience and self-confidence it takes to work with kids as equal partners. We must do better. There is so little joy in the world of most kids. The recognition of worth and accomplishment is so strained and so stingily parceled and our condemnation so freely given that it completely overwhelms the elation of any positive, shared experiences. I find it no mystery at all that kids tune us out.

And if you think I'm exaggerating, you're probably part of the problem.

Second, I believe that in most cases the most rewarding and significant things that happen to a kid happen outside the classroom: falling in love, climbing a mountain, rapping for hours with an adult who is loved or respected, building a house, seeing a part of the world never seen before, coming to some deep personal empathy with a kid from another background and culture, or genuinely understanding some serious community or national problem.

These are all things that may *later* give him the motivation necessary to *want* to be able to write correctly and forcefully, or *want* to know history, or *want* to understand the complexities of nature and man through biology, botany, psychology, anthropology, or physics. But we too often ignore these events, seeing them as "irrelevant" or "froth." Until they are acknowledged as important and relevant to the student's existence, all he does inside those walls is doomed to seem meaningless and without reason. What we must realize is that the walls of those buildings we imprison kids in now must come crashing down, and the world must be their classroom, the classroom a reflection of their world. The two must work as one.

The purpose of our schools, then, must be to help our kids discover who they are, their loves and hates, and the stance they are going to take in the face of the world. It becomes our responsibility as teachers to put them in situations where this testing can go on; to create for them memorable experiences that they will carry with them like talismen and come back to touch a thousand times during the course of their lives. I'm convinced, for example, that a student learns more about himself and life generally in three days spent with an Aunt Arie (who went no further than the fourth grade) than in four years of high school English.

We've gotten everything mixed up. We saw a man in a factory say, "I can guarantee that if you put piece A and piece B and piece C together according to this blueprint, you will get the following result, and I can guarantee it will happen every time." We saw that, and it seemed good.

And so we took it to our schools. "Put text A and kit B and qualified teacher C before the students of this land, and we can guarantee they will all read at level D at the end of one year." We tried that, and it was not good.

But now we cannot stop. We have substituted understanding *Silas Marner* for understanding the communications (no matter what form they may take) of others. We have substituted the dates of the Spanish Armada's great battles for an understanding of history and how it works and how the past affects the present. We have substituted the use of clay molds of little figures and the copying of pretty pictures for creativity in art. All in the style of technology. "These tools and these ingredients and these instructions will yield these results. Follow them. At the end, you will have a well-educated student, ready to think for himself and take his place in society. This we can predict." And it does not work. And we are reaping the harvest now.

We have ruled out the possibility of anything worthwhile, new, or creative coming out of random behavior, play, or the testing out of a kid's own ideas in any area from art through zoology. And so we have eliminated those activities. And we expect our kids to learn from their mistakes.

We have ruled out the possibility of a student's being able to make competent decisions regarding his life, his environment, his conduct—even his bed time—so we make those decisions for him. And we expect him to be able to walk out of our schools self-confident, ready to make competent decisions regarding his life, his environment, his conduct . . . .

We have separated him from his world—have made it irrelevant to our tidy curricula—and yet we count on him to know what to do with that same world, and have creative solutions for its problems, when our time with him is done. Amazing.

And third, I'm afraid we've become a nation of nomads with no sense of that security or serenity that comes from being able to say, "Here is where I belong. Here is my place, my time, my home, my birthright, my community. Here I am loved and known, and here I love in turn."

It happens all around us. *Foxfire* has had four different editors at Doubleday. The first three have left, one by one. It happened to me personally. My mother was from Poughkeepsie, New York; my father from Marietta, Ohio; my stepmother from Washington, Pennsylvania. I was born in Wheeling, West Virginia; raised in Athens, Georgia; educated in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, Ithaca, New York, and Baltimore, Maryland; and I now work in Rabun Gap, Georgia. I've learned a lot from all of that, but still I have no more idea of where I fit in space and time and community than if I had just landed inside a meteor from Pluto. I make my home where I am.

And it happens to my students. Over half of them move away permanently. They are giving this county away. Our tax assessors are all land developers from outside the area. Parents have no family left to sell the farms to, so they sell them off and watch "second home" extravaganzas take their places. Kentucky Fried Chicken is proud to announce its arrival . . . .

The only way I can see to get our kids committed to our neighborhoods and our communities is to get them so involved in their surroundings that they become determined that the community's destiny will be in *their* hands, not in the hands of commercial rapists. They must feel that they are essential to

the future of their homes. The alternative is to watch them leave, creating a vacuum filled, in our county's case, by ten thousand summer lots all priced so high that even if those kids *wanted* to come back someday they couldn't afford to.

Until we put together the article on shuckings and house raisings (in this volume), none of us realized the extent to which people used to be dependent on and responsible for each other. We knew that once there *were* shuckings, but these sounded somehow remote—curiosities of a long-gone day. Now that we've done some real work on the subject, I realize how widespread and pervasive and varied and common these practices were. They were a part of everyone's existence here —and they were a constant part—not a once-a-month rarity.

Somewhere along the way, we've lost something fine. Perhaps in our search for personal satisfaction and pleasure, we've dug so deeply into ourselves that we've forgotten each other. The extent to which neighbors are strangers is frightening, and the extent to which we've blocked out and structured and programmed most of our time for ourselves may be tragic. It may mean that we truly *have* lost our sense of community, and in the process killed our interdependence forever.

It's a mad cycle. We get jobs to support our families. They take our time. Our time gone, we do less together. We see our neighbors less and less frequently, and a gulf is formed. With the loss of contact comes loss of friendship, and with the loss of friendship/dependence comes hesitance at reopening the contact (you have to work at being friends), and with the hesitance comes suspicion. We read about crime and dope and . . . I wonder if . . .?

Soon we are a community of isolated islands ("Who are those people who just moved in?" "I don't know. We ought to go find out someday.") and the damage is done. We need only look at a friendship quilt *(The Foxfire Book,* page 143) to see how great the loss.

Now I'm not suggesting that everyone should suddenly get together and have a pea thrashing. A barn raising in the middle of suburbia is likewise farfetched. But as our leisure time increases, and as we search for new ways to fill it, surely we are

inventive enough to be able to find ways to work/play/create together as communities.

There are a few hopeful, tentative signs. Community-wide trash cleanups, for example. Or neighborhood parks and recreation areas built and designed for the community by the community. Or food cooperatives. But they are often tentative, groping, short-lived.

Too often we fail to see any common bonds between ourselves. Maybe if we set about with our kids creating some fertile ground for those bonds, we'll find how close our interests and our instincts and our needs as human beings really are. And maybe we'll find again the rich wisdom in that sense of shared responsibility and love that once existed.

Until that time, we may have to resign ourselves to a world where our kids flee home leaving their parents behind: lonely, embittered, bewildered islands on a whole wide street full of people.

As I said, I'm far from having all the answers for myself or anyone else. But those things I believe. They are the platforms from which I work in Rabun Gap. I am convinced that we, as adults must constantly cling to, affirm, and celebrate with our kids those things we love: sunsets, laughter, the taste of a good meal, the warmth of a hickory fire shared by real friends, the joy of discovery and accomplishment, empathy with the Aunt Aries and their triumphs and sorrows, the constant surprises of life; and we must hope that, as teachers, in the process of that celebration and that empathy, we will build in our students' souls such a reservoir of warmth and hope and generosity and energy and self-assurance that it would carry them through hell. That is surely what those who do not have that reservoir will face.

Foxfire is one means I have stumbled upon to help with that building. It is not enough by itself. There are hundreds of other ways. But with Myles Horton in mind, it is the way I have chosen, for me, for now. It isn't going to work for all my kids, but I believe it's worked for some; and I'm constantly revising to make it work for more.

And I have to believe that if a man is doing that, then, though cicadas ring forever in his ears, he may not be praised, but he at least will not be damned; for he is doing everything he can in his small part of the globe to help, in his small way, to set things right.

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Introduction to

Foxfire 3

In the spring of 1976, *Foxfire* magazine will be ten years old. By all the normal standards of measurement, we should have plenty to celebrate, for *Foxfire* has not only survived, but is being called one of the most dramatically successful high school projects in sight.

By 1976, our first book will have sold well over a million copies. The second book will be right behind it. The telephone in our office rings constantly, bringing requests from film and TV producers, advertising executives, and free-lance writers and photographers. I receive hundreds of letters a year inviting me to speak before various organizations, serve on various boards, lend my name to various proposals or proposed proposals, or accept various jobs. Scores of visitors come through our tiny office with no more reason than "just wanting to see where it's done," or wanting us to introduce them to some "real mountain people." Not long ago, a stranger came huffing the half mile up the mountain to my log house, where a couple of kids and I were spending a Saturday adding a porch, took a picture of us with his Instamatic, and then struggled back down the mountain.

I accept several invitations a year to speak. Almost invariably in the question-and-answer period that follows the presen-

tation, the same question comes up. It goes something like this: "Did you ever dream when you started the project that all this would happen?"

I usually laugh and answer, "No, never." And that's true. I sometimes don't see how we made it past our second issue. But at a recent talk, something perverse in my character or my mood made me answer, "Say you're a high school teacher who wants to reach his students in a very special way. You start a project with them, and in the early days, you all do everything together. When you walk across the campus, as often as not a kid will come charging up from behind and tackle you, laughing crazily as you roll, wrestling, scattering books and papers across the grass.

"Your project prospers. Your name is in lots of papers and before lots of folks. You come back on campus after a successful four-day speaking engagement, and a kid stands before you looking down, scuffing his feet at something imaginary in the dirt, and says, 'Gee, you're not around much any more.'

"Are you still successful? Do you have anything to rejoice about except notoriety and a stack of invitations? Is that success?"

I think about that a lot now that we're besieged. And I'm finding out, like lots of others before me—(some of whom warned me in advance), that success, interestingly enough, turns out to be a mixed blessing. It's bright with opportunity, but it's also jammed up with problems—a lot like walking around town with a rattlesnake in your front pocket.

It's an old story. I've read about it in various books and magazines. I've seen it at work on other people. I never really expected to have to deal with it personally, but here I am, writing this in Room 219 of the Great Smokies Hilton in Asheville instead of at my cluttered desk, because there are too many distractions at home.

Visibility presents rather fragile organizations like ours with a number of problems. Some examples. When a group that's used to getting 3 letters a day suddenly begins to get 40 a day (something like 14,000 a year), and has to answer them with a

staff of high school students that can only work on the project part time and has a number of other activities that we'd like them to be involved in besides answering letters anyway, then some adjustments are needed. When we run a workshop for teachers interested in implementing the same sort of project in their own locations, and twenty of those teachers ask permission to bring their classes up for a day to see our operation, we know that if we say yes to all of them it's going to mean that the equivalent of *one month* of school days will have been spent giving guided tours instead of writing articles, and that all the groups are going to go away disappointed anyway because all there is to see is a little cluster of three impossibly cramped ten-foot-by-ten-foot rooms cluttered with typewriters and envelopes and paper (we can't take them to visit contacts; you can't fit a whole class into the tiny living room of a mountain home). Yet we know that if we say no to them, we run the risk of seeming brusque and uncooperative and cold, and here we are again—stuck between a rock and a hard place. You get the idea.

So it's been pretty interesting around here for the last year or two. Margie, Suzy, Pat, and I, as a staff, have learned a lot, and we're slowly beginning to develop some techniques for coping; trying to stay positive and helpful whenever we can, but also trying to keep foremost in our minds that image of a kid, disappointed, scuffing his feet in the dirt.

The problem, of course, becomes to figure out a way to grab that thing called success, shake it up, turn it inside out, and make it work *for* us instead of letting it eat us alive. Here's the system we've devised for the moment. It seems to be working in the biggest areas of concern:

The first area is one that I jokingly tag the, "I know you're busy but . . ." department since we hear that line many times a day. If the request asks me to come and speak, I ask a couple of questions in return. Is the group that's inviting me willing, for example, to foot not only my expenses, but also those of two or three of the students? If they aren't, I usually don't go. Is the group asking us for some specific input, or is it looking for entertainment? If it's a group of English teachers from the state of

North Carolina that are really looking for some ways to get their kids involved; or a high school in Parkersburg, West Virginia, that wants to start a similar project and wants me to come and help get it off the ground; if we can spare the time away from the office, and if it's not during one of those months we periodically set aside just for the kids here and let nothing else interfere, then we might go. On the other hand, if it's a group that is a four-hour drive away, and just wants a little after-luncheon presentation to fill a hole in the program chairman's calendar, which for us means a full day away from the office with a good chance that little will be accomplished, we don't go. If it's a local group within ours or an immediately adjacent county, we almost always go because we feel it's vital that people in our area know what we're up to.

Using this system, we can get most of the student editors out on at least one good trip (after they've all been once, we usually turn down everything else until the next school year), and we find that some fine things often happen on those trips that add yet another dimension to our program. On numbers of occasions, for example, the kids we've taken with us have never been on a plane before, have never encountered a hotel elevator, revolving doors, escalators, and have never been entertained at a sit-down dinner. They've just never had the chance. Nor have they previously been put into situations where they're asked for autographs, or where they're asked to address a group that may be as large as several thousand people, or where they're asked by teachers for *their* advice as to how teachers should teach, or what it's really like to be a high school student. I've seen them stunned again and again by the fact that adults are asking *their* opinions on certain issues and are seriously considering, accepting, or challenging their answers in a healthy, friendly exchange of views. We try to pull out all the stops on a trip and give completely of ourselves to the sponsoring group. As a result, many of the students we take are put in situations where they have to think seriously about our project, what it's all about and precisely how it works, because they're going to have to articulate all that to people who have never been here. Suddenly they find themselves not only

with a new understanding of who, in part, their audience out there *is*, and a new understanding of the fact that lots of people they've never met before *are* watching their work; but they also find themselves evaluating the work they're doing and the whole Foxfire project in a new, more serious, and more objective light. Even if the end result of the visit is that nothing specific is accomplished by being there, the kids, at least, come back having had a solid, sobering experience—and often come back, newly recharged and committed, thinking of ways to alter our operation here at home to better serve the other kids, the audience that's waiting for their next magazine, and the community in which they work.

If the request is from an organization that wants to come here and do some filming or some photography, certain other questions come into play, all of which lead up to the big question: into what position is the request going to put the people who might be filmed or photographed? What's in it for them besides publicity that might bring people trooping to their doors, and do they want to be put in that position? But first, the class as a whole decides whether or not they will be willing at the time designated to work closely with a camera crew (if the crew doesn't want the kids around, but simply wants introductions, we don't even consider it). If the kids have recently been through such an experience, and they don't want to gear up to do it all over again, or if they're involved in so many things that they don't feel they can take the time, the project is vetoed.

If, however, they are interested in looking at the project more closely and perhaps want to do it, they ask for more details. For example, the JFG Coffee Company recently decided that it needed a new set of commercials, and the Fitzgerald Advertising Company was hired to make them. The plan was to make six commercials, each featuring a mountain person (the JFG marketing area covers much of the southern Appalachians) demonstrating some skill. At the end of the thirty-second scene, all the person had to say was something to the effect that, "It takes a lot of skill and patience to do this." Then the announcer would come in and say, "Just as it takes this person

time and patience to make butter, so, too, it takes JFG time and patience to make a fine coffee." Something like that.

Thinking they might be able to save filming time, and save trouble, they approached us and asked if we would be willing to locate the subjects for the commercials and prepare them so that all the film crew had to do was walk in, film the six scenes in four days, and walk out. It sounded unsavory at first, but we told them the kids might be willing to do it. They would simply have to come up and present their case and let the kids decide.

The writer and producer flew up from New Orleans, and I gave them a class period to present their story boards to the kids and answer questions. The kids wanted to know if *Foxfire's* name would be used (they didn't want it to be), or if the name of the county would be used (they didn't want that either after seeing the number of tourists that came through as a result of the movie *Deliverance*), or if the contact would have to drink some coffee (they didn't want that). They also wanted to know how much each would be paid, how long they would have to work, etc. They grilled the ad agency representatives for an hour, then told them they would talk about it among themselves and let the agency know next week.

For several days, that was all they talked about. Finally they decided that they'd co-operate *if* they could find people in the community who *wanted* to do it. They headed out to locate a butter churner, a beekeeper, a man who would plow with a horse, some quilters, a weaver, and someone who would dig sassafras and make tea with it—all skills the ad agency wanted pictured. In two days they had found them all, and they called the agency and said that they could come in *if* they paid the people in cash just as soon as the cameras stopped rolling, would give us copies of the finished commercials for our archive, and would pay for a community showing.

The agency agreed, came in, and the kids had it set up so they got all they came for in less than four days. The contacts got paid on the spot, and everyone was happy. One of the contacts, for example, came up to the kids afterward and said, "I just want you all to know that I am grateful to you for thinking of me. That's the most money I ever made at one time in my

life. That will pay for my seed and fertilizer t' is year and put me in the black for the first time in years." The party was held, and over a hundred people came to watch the finished commercials before they were to start airing, and they approved. And later, when one of the subjects was bitten by a copperhead, the ad agency sent up a donation to help with the hospital expenses.

Another recent request was from a production company that wanted to film a two-hour television special here. The film would tell the fictionalized story of a boy who came from a city, got involved in a project like *Foxfire*, and through that involvement came to some new understanding about himself and his heritage. The project went through several months of negotiations, script writers even came from California with a sample script in hand, and in the end was not agreed to because the kids insisted that the film should not be called *Foxfire*, nor could the project shown in the film be called "Foxfire," since the story itself was fictionalized and had never happened here. The company, having already made a number of concessions, balked at that one, and the contract was never signed. I have friends who think that the kids, in that case, made a mistake. Whether they actually did or not is somewhat beside the point. The fact is that they made a decision that they believed in after weeks of real deliberation, and that decision was adhered to even though I personally thought (and told them I thought) that making the film might be a fine educational experience, might be a chance for us to provide an antidote to *Deliverance*, and might be a fine chance for us to help shape what could be a genuinely exciting television offering. In the end, the experience the students went through in the act of having to come to their decision was probably enough. And it was a weighty experience for me personally to watch them at work, see the intensity of their commitment to our project and our community, and see the seriousness with which they deliberated as to how they felt both the project and the community should be allowed to be used by others.

In another vein, if the request is from a person or group that wants to come and visit and be taken by us to meet some of the

people we've written about, we turn it down. From the beginning, our hope was that our project would, in part, encourage others to begin to look in their own back yards for the riches that are there, and for the experiences that can come from that involvement with a community. Every neighborhood has its own Aunt Aries and its own kids that could easily be put in touch with them. When people want, instead, to come here and be given a guided tour, we've failed, in a sense, to accomplish part of what we set out to do. We have no intention of putting our contacts on public display, or running bus tours past their homes. That's not only degrading but dehumanizing.

On the other hand, if the request is from a person or group that wants to come and work with the kids, get (or give) ideas, engage them in some serious discussions, or perhaps try to implement the same sort of project back home, then we read the letter in class. If some kids want to host the group and really set up a first-rate visit, we give those kids the letter, and from that point on, it's their responsibility. One of them writes the group back, tells them to come ahead, works out the dates and details, and hosts the group when it arrives. If there are no kids who want to take it on, we write back with our apologies. The alternative (and we know this from bitter experience) is two or three groups a day coming through, no work done here, and, after a time, zero educational experiences for the students involved. The last thing we want is to see them turned into the equivalent of the bored, faceless guides at places like Mammoth Cave.

To handle the requests for craft items the contacts make, the kids each year set up a team that will take the letters, pick up the items, give the contacts the full purchase price, bring the items back, and wrap and ship them at our expense. It's one of many services we try to provide for our contacts as part of our attempt to thank them for the time they've spent with us. The kids get a good sense, through activities like these, of what it's like to give of themselves and use part of their resources to help others.

If the request is for a job with us, we don't usually consider it unless it comes from a community person, or a kid who used

to work with us, has just finished college, and wants to come back home. If the request is for us to consider a manuscript for publication in the magazine, we turn it down, because the kids write all the articles. On the other hand, if someone writes in and wants us to find and take a picture of their grandfather's grave, or wants us to provide additional details about something we wrote, or wants other specific information and we have a kid who wants to track that down, we turn it over to him. If we don't have anyone with the time, we usually write back, tell them we're holding the request, and wait until a kid comes along who wants to tackle it. Theoretically, each student should be held responsible for his article and for any questions from readers that it may stimulate. The problem in our case is that by the time the article comes out in book form and begins to draw questions, the kid has already graduated from our school and is out in the world somewhere.

In some cases, we feel that the request really deserves attention whether or not there is a student to handle it. In those cases, we as a staff take them on ourselves on our own free time. By and large, however, the general rule is that if we can't turn what comes through the office into a true learning experience for some students here, then there's no room for it. The alternative is to be swamped, and to watch the main goals of our work go down the drain.

The second area of success is money and again the question becomes that of how the income can be taken and used by the kids so they can learn and accomplish something in the process. Everyone wants it. Who's going to get it? And who's it going to be given by?

Some time ago, we set up a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation with our own board of directors, advisory boards, lawyer, etc. The corporation exists within the school as a separate organization. *All* of the income goes into the corporate account. A portion of it is used to pay the staff members who work with the kids, to pay the salaries of the many kids we hire full time to work with us during the summers, to buy equipment and supplies, pay our printing and postage and telephone bills, give scholarships or loans to our kids who want to go on to college

but couldn't otherwise, pay expenses on extended collecting trips into the mountains, and so on.

Beyond those expenses, the students are encouraged to try to come up with responsible, useful ways in which the balance of the money can be invested to provide income or continue the project long after the book royalties have dried up; be returned to the community in which we work; be donated to worthy groups; or be used to help out our contacts.

Two years ago, for example, the students voted to purchase a fifty-acre piece of property to which they wished to move and then reconstruct about twenty endangered log buildings. A check for $35,000 was written to pay for the land, and a fourteen-year-old kid signed it. Millard Buchanan, a retired logger in the community, was hired as foreman; and with him in charge, a collection of community people and students began, in April of 1974, to move the buildings. By Christmas, they had eleven log buildings and two barns up and under new roofs. This year, approximately ten more cabins will be added. Then, for years to come, new groups of community kids will be engaged in doing the required finishing work.

The area is divided into three groups of buildings. One area is set aside for the collection of artifacts (looms, spinning wheels, wagons, tools, etc.) the project has amassed over the years. Here, new groups of kids can actually use the collection themselves, or they can borrow from it to take supplies to a contact they've found who can show them how to make an object, but has long since parted with his tools and materials.

The second area will house, in separate buildings, our collection of audio tapes, photographs, videotape, and film. Each building will, aside from the collection, also contain working/editing studios. In the videotape cabin, for example, will be the editing decks and equipment the students use for producing the shows they film, edit, and broadcast on a weekly basis over the local cable tv network. Using equipment they've purchased themselves with book royalties, the kids produce shows that range from basketball games, to community group discussions of local issues, to *Foxfire* interviews that bring the pages of the magazine to life—all shows that we all hope give our commun-

ity a new sense of unity and interdependence while teaching the kids some very professional skills.

The third group of buildings will be set aside and furnished so that people who attend workshops, conferences, or board meetings that the kids host will have accommodations; or so additional staff members who want to work with us for short periods of time will be able to settle in right away in rent-free housing.

The remainder of the land—some forty acres—will be used as an environmental laboratory for all the students in the area.

The students have decided—in what will doubtless be greeted as an unpopular decision—that the project will be closed to the general traveling public. There are many historic restorations in the mountains that people can visit, and the kids don't want to use their money to pave large parking lots or hire the maintenance people and guides who would be necessary. It will be open to any local community groups or individuals who wish to work with us or visit, or to a limited number of workshops or special guests. Rather than being a museum which tourists visit, it will instead be a working studio, dedicated to the people of this region, from which will come the books and magazines, films, recordings, and video shows the kids will produce in concert with the community people they will enlist to work with them.

Over the next few years, enough money will probably come in to complete the project, but the kids, in an interesting maneuver, are informally approaching groups outside the mountains who may wish to provide a gift that will sponsor the cost of the reconstruction of a building (approximately $3,700). Whenever such a grant is made, a plaque on the building's wall acknowledges that fact, and money that would have been spent there can be set aside to fund yet another project. Recently, for example, just such a gift from the Georgia Bicentennial Commission enabled us to bring out the first book we have published ourselves, *News from Pigeon Roost*. The book is an edited collection of thirty years of newspaper columns written by Harvey J. Miller of Greenmountain, North Carolina, for the Johnson City (Tennessee) Tri-County *News*. Jammed with the

affairs of day-to-day living in a tiny mountain community, the book was, as Harvey called it in the introduction, "A dream come true." Part of the first edition was sent as an issue of *Foxfire* to all our subscribers, and the remainder (1,500 copies) was sent free to Harvey to market himself through his still-active weekly column and through stores in the area. All the proceeds are his to keep.

Through all these projects, whether they be donating the publishing costs of a book to someone like Harvey Miller, buying a new guitar for a local songwriter, helping with the doctor's bills for a contact, or providing employment in the county, the kids add yet another dimension to their activities and their education, one that I feel is going to make them ever more willing to step beyond their own needs and extend themselves to others around them. It's success, used as a tool to make positive things happen.

One final area stimulated by success has to be wrestled with, and it's a rough one. It occurs when a person like myself realizes that an organization has been created that has equipment, land, vehicles, employees, and buildings, and he wakes up asking, "What have I done?" It's then that some of the big questions come: "What happens if a plane I'm on goes down coming into Charlotte?" "What happens if a kid falls off a roof of one of our buildings and breaks his back?" "What happens if I suddenly find that more and more of my creative energy is going into the maintenance, care, and feeding of the beast itself than into the projects, or into insuring the flexibility, responsiveness, and creativity of the group as the needs of kids change from year to year?"

We've all seen it happen. A great idea (like a public school system) is somehow transformed into a grotesque, clanking, rust-encrusted machine, the basic maintenance of which saps everyone's time and energy to the detriment of the original goals. Or someone founds a great organization only to find himself afraid that not a single other person can run it nearly as well; when senility strikes years later, the individual has made no plans for the organization's survival, or for a hand-picked successor to carry on, and the whole thing collapses with a sigh.

And it's not enough to say, "Let it all take care of itself." It won't. In our case, who gets our land? Let that take care of itself, and it falls into the hands of a Florida land developer. Who gets our continuing royalties from the sale of the books? Let that take care of itself and the IRS snatches it. Who gets our archives and our collection? Let that take care of itself, and every antique dealer around has a field day.

It's not the problem of whether or not the stuff will be disposed of. It's how it will be disposed if something goes awry. Without some attention to those details, it could all fall into the hands of the vultures who wait on the sidelines, cheering, and then move in to get a free ride off our sweat and toil, make money off what we've done, and leave the kids by the wayside wondering just what the hell happened.

We've tried to cover all that. Early, talented graduates of our school have been and are being brought back from college as full-time employees and board members. Money has been set aside to guarantee salaries. Liability insurance packages have been set up. Luckily, the kids guarantee our responsiveness and flexibility just because they are kids, and we care about them deeply—there's a new group of them every year, fresh and demanding, clamoring to step in and take over.

If all else fails, there are documents that will insure that equipment will be given to appropriate groups, and the restoration will go to the county as our way of thanking its residents for being so patient and co-operative with us. And at the very least, we can all rest secure knowing that a number of kids who worked with us were able to share and help direct a great experiment that took them, for a time, far beyond their ordinary high school fare. And that's something. But I'm counting on the belief that we can do even better than that, and I'm working toward it.

Beyond all this, of course, is the ego-burden success can place on a person's head. Groups approach me, convinced that I am something I know that I am not. Convinced that I came to the mountains with the whole grand scheme intact like a symphony in my mind. And, most distressingly, convinced that it

was so brilliantly executed tactically that they could never duplicate it themselves.

That's all baloney. The whole thing was a series of both fortunate accidents (having a fraternity brother at Doubleday, for example, who set up *The Foxfire Book:* or meeting the IDEAS folks completely by accident one day in Washington), and tiny day-by-day responses to the needs of a group of kids that gradually gave us the shape and form we now have.

"A series of fortunate accidents and tiny day-by-day responses to the needs of a group of kids . . . ."

The whole thing is now being duplicated so many times (thanks to the help and persistence of IDEAS, which has used our kids as consultants to help start similar projects in places from Maine to Missouri, from Alaska to Haiti, and which is now making available a complete printed package that details to any interested group the educational philosophy and the various skills and tips helpful to know in pulling it off) that it is now obvious that all manner of individuals, institutions, and informal groupings of good people can get something similar going in their own locations if they just want to badly enough.

I keep reminding myself of all that.

The ever-present collection of people seeking autographs can change a person's head, but the kids are really helpful there. As folks come up, the kids often nudge me from behind and whisper something like, "Think you're a big deal don't you?" And I keep reminding myself that we, as a staff, are guests in this school, and that we could be asked to leave at any time if things went awry. That, of course, would be our death—we would no longer have access to the students, and there would no longer be any reason to continue. All these facts help keep success in some sort of perspective, and that's vital.

Is it going to work? I think so. I think we're going to be okay. Because yesterday, as I was walking across campus, two kids tackled me and the books and papers I was carrying were suddenly scattered across the grass.

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